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LIFE IN THE MOFUSSIL;

OR,

THE CIVILIAN IN LOWER BENGAL.

86894 B2002

BY

AN EX-CIVILIAN.

BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY. JACKSON ORIENTAL COLLECTION.

VOL. II.

JJA-g 36

LONDON:
C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1878.

00086894

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CHAPTER I.

ACTING AS JOINT MAGISTRATE AT KISHNAGHUR.

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As I drove along the dusty road, I felt a certain sense of freedom in having cast off the official cares of the place, and thought of many things that my successor would find both difficult and laborious to unravel and bring to a satisfactory conclusion, *e.g.*, Bunwarree Lall's case; but I knew that the man I was about to succeed at Kishnaghur would leave similar worries to me; so that my lightness of heart would be only temporary.

Indeed, my heart was heavy enough on leaving Mozufferpore, after a couple of days' stay there, and saying good-bye to all the friends I had made during the last three years. This is one of the disagreeable phases of Indian official life. We are thrown for two or three years into daily contact (it is only the subdivisional official who lives alone) with the same very limited number of people; and we get to know each other so well, that the very smallest details of our lives become subjects of mutual interest, when one day there comes an order in the *Gazette*, and we are torn apart, perhaps never to meet again.

Nevertheless, I always retained a most affectionate recollection of my friendships at this my first station; and I do not think that any formed afterwards under analogous circumstances, took quite such deep root. My journey to Calcutta was very easily performed, as the railway was now open all the way; and as I flew past the scene of my meal in the platelayer's cottage, and thought of the very slow progress I then made, I was in a frame of mind fully to appreciate the blessings of Western civilization, notwithstanding anything that Mr. Ruskin may say to the contrary.

On leaving, I had disposed of everything except my table and bed linen; so that a good deal of my time in Calcutta was passed in making purchases in that extraordinary place, the China Bazaar, where Hindus vie with Chinese in endeavouring to dispose of their wares stored up for European consumers, and where, if you ask for a pot of jam, an effort is made to tempt you with a batch of Indian gauze vests; and if you demand some netting for mosquito curtains, you will probably be offered a mahogany dining table.

This necessarily makes getting one's real wants satisfied rather a long business; but a couple of days' patience and perseverance in the stifling atmosphere of these narrow lanes enabled me to accomplish this; and having seen a boat start with a tolerable load to find its way up to Kishnaghur by the network of streams with many names, but which are all offshoots of the mighty Ganges, flowing down to the sea by the various routes cut for themselves through the soft alluvial soil, I rested for a couple of days in Calcutta.

It was somewhat melancholy to find that almost all my former friends had disappeared. All the officials, from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal downwards, seemed to have been changed, and I was glad to get away to my new appointment. Kishnaghur was much more accessible than Mozufferpore, for I started at 7 a.m. from the Calcutta terminus of the Eastern Bengal Railway, and reached Buggoolah, the station for Kishnaghur, between fifty and sixty miles distant, in three and a half hours. There I found a buggy of the Collector Sahib's waiting my arrival, which was to convey me over the twelve miles of metalled road leading to Kishnaghur, the capital of the Nuddea district.

I found myself in a country very different in its features to Tirhoot. The road was a very heavy embankment the whole way. In some places the water was still lying, though it was the driest part of the year, viz., the end of May; and it was evident that in the rainy season a good deal of the country through which I drove would be seventeen or eighteen feet under water. To the north of the Nuddea district, of which Kishnaghur is the capital, there is some high land; but in this part, and the neighbouring district of Jessore, rice is the principal crop, and has the faculty apparently of growing from floating roots and rising as the water rises. When ripe, it is cut by men in boats, and the stalks attain an enormous length.

Another important crop is indigo, which is grown, however, on a totally different system to that pursued in Tirhoot. In the dry season all the various streams filtering down to the sea are merely silver threads winding among innumerable sandy islands, the soil of which is specially

adapted for the growth of indigo. They are called "churs" in the native tongue, and are sown broadcast, very little labour or expense being necessary for the preparation of the land. But when the rivers rise, towards the end of May, in consequence of the melting of the snows higher up, the silver threads become mighty streams, and all traces of these islands disappear. It is therefore necessary to get the crop cut and carried before the advent of the inundation; and in some years this is not possible, as the rivers rise so suddenly that no procurable amount of labour is sufficient for the purpose. Sometimes the crop is not ripe for the sickle when the waters come down; and in either case the unfortunate planter sees a crop that a respite of a few days, or even hours, would render worth lakhs of rupees,—I have heard of one planter losing £200,000 in one year in this way,—slowly but surely swallowed up before his eyes.

Here also the European capitalist has found it cheaper to get the plant cultivated on the contract system by native agency than by himself directly. Advances were made to the ryot, who contracted to sow a certain area with indigo and bring the produce to the factory. The produce was computed by bundles; and if he did not bring enough of these to repay the advances, the surplus due was carried forward to his debit for the next season. The ryot class is proverbially improvident, and if cash be offered them, they are willing to accept it without any sort of scrutiny of the conditions accompanying it, since these need not be fulfilled for many months. But even supposing the ryot to be careful, honest, and anxious to perform his part of the

contract, the factory *employés* (omlah) did all they could to prevent it. It was, on the contrary, their object to keep the ryots always in debt to the factory, and this was a thing only too easily done. The ryot took no thought for the morrow, but having received his advance, spent it on pressing necessities.

From the moment, however, that he had accepted it he came subject to the supervision of the factory omlah; in fact, they acquired a sort of authority over him. They could come to measure his land to see if he had sown the right quantity; in short, could pay him continual visits of inspection on some ground or other, and threaten him with the anger of their employer if not conciliated by a *douceur*. The advance even would be paid through them, and a goodly proportion of it would remain in their hands. When the crop was cut and brought in bundles to the factory, they could make two bundles count as one only by straining the rope with which their girth was measured; and an approximately fair measurement was to be obtained only by a further *douceur*. The rate paid by the planter was so low as to make it impossible for the ryot to get a profit out of the crop, even if he had been fairly treated. In a bad season the loss was the ryot's, at least a considerable proportion of it; for the unrepaid advances were carried forward to his debit for the next year. So that the rule was, that a ryot who had once received advances was always in debt to the factory, and that in Nuddea and some of the neighbouring districts a considerable proportion of the population was in hereditary debt and servitude to indigo.

In many cases ryots who were not hampered by the debts of their fathers, and who were unwilling to take advances, were forced to accept them by intimidation and by fraud. It was no uncommon thing for a ryot who refused to enter into a contract to be kidnapped and confined in a factory outbuilding until compliant. It was frequently useless to complain to the police. The orders given to them, in case of the probability of the occurrence of a riot, were to prevent a breach of the peace, without reference to the rights of parties. They found it possible to do this only by siding with the stronger party, who was always the planter. Doubtless there were hired lattials (clubmen) on both sides; but the forces of the planter were always better organized and more sure of being paid. Our administration was only in course of formation, our magisterial courts were at long distances apart, and, as a necessary result, might had too good a chance against right.

Even had all the planters been scrupulous and energetic, they could not have prevented some oppression. But many of the proprietors were absentees, spending their large profits luxuriously in England, and their concerns were carried on by managers who had to strain every nerve to meet the demands from home, some of them, the subordinate managers, young, inexperienced, and altogether in the hands of the omlah. It was natural too that the conquering race should behave in a somewhat imperious manner to the conquered; for, say what we will, and legislate as we may, we cannot make an European think that a native is equal to himself. A ryot, therefore, who refused to receive advances was looked upon as a recalcitrant

inferior who must be coerced into obedience. His oil, seed, or other crops already sown were uprooted, his cattle carried off, occasionally himself kidnapped, and cases occurred of whole villages being burnt down.

It was difficult to bring these offences home to the actual perpetrators, partly through the inadequacy of our administration (since then largely reinforced and improved), and partly through the little reliance that could be placed on native evidence. The planter himself was seldom present, and generally, probably, would be able to swear truthfully that he knew nothing of the details, even if the case were brought home to his *employés*, having purposely allowed himself to be kept ignorant of them. In some instances, however, the planters themselves were personally criminated.

In Baraset it had been determined to create a new subordinate magisterial jurisdiction, and the site for the Subdivisional Court buildings had been selected in the neighbourhood of a planter's factory. He sent in a petition to the Government praying for its location elsewhere, and stating that its vicinity to him would probably give rise to a great deal of litigation between him and his indigo ryots, the latter being incited thereto by the band of needy, pettifogging practitioners which always sprang into existence round a criminal Court. He further stated that the records of the nearest existing Court would show that for the last three years there had been no disagreeable litigation between him and the ryots on the ground of indigo cultivation.

While his petition was under consideration, the magis-

terial officer who was about to open the new subdivision, and who was inspecting the neighbourhood prior to reporting finally on the site, was on his way to pay a visit to the factory. A little boy ran up to him just before he entered it, and said that two men were at this moment in confinement in one of the outbuildings for refusing to sow indigo. He gave their names, and the Magistrate, proceeding to the place, called them out loudly. They answered. He then sent to the planter, who was in the house, to produce the keys. He did so, and the two men were then released. It appeared that they had been in confinement at this and other places belonging to the same concern for three months, though they had not been otherwise harshly treated. The planter was personally convicted, and finally fined £50. The punishment appears not too heavy. It seems needless to add that his petition with reference to the site of the new Subdivisional Court was rejected.

At length the evils of the system brought about their natural results. About the year 1854 or 1855, the then Judge of Nuddea addressed a letter to the Government of Bengal on the subject of the great oppression to which the cultivators were subjected. The then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who generally seemed disposed to act on the principle of *quieta non movere*, told him that his remarks were not based on sufficient experience, and rather shelved the subject. Somewhat later, however, in the neighbouring district of Baraset, a planter had complained to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, that the Joint Magistrate of that district was decidedly hostile to the cultivation of indigo, and was not behaving impartially. He had been

called upon for an explanation, and the result of the correspondence was, that the ryots got to know that it was not the wish of Government that they should sow indigo, but that they were quite indifferent in the matter. Hitherto they had been under the impression that it was their wish.

Just after this, about 1859–60, a native Deputy Magistrate issued a circular order to the police within the jurisdiction of his subdivision to protect the ryots, even if they had made contracts, against forcible entry by the planter for the purpose of sowing indigo. This was very injudicious, and appeared to induce the ryots to consider that the Government was absolutely hostile to the cultivation of indigo. They were only too ready to seize upon any pretext for emancipating themselves, and the whole of the indigo districts in the neighbourhood were soon in a state of ferment. Thousands of ryots, who had received advances for the season's cultivation, refused to fulfil their contracts. The sowings can only take place for about a couple of months in the early part of the year, and even then only after favourable falls of rain, which are few and far between.

There was imminent risk that this great trade would be ruined. The Government did its utmost to explain to the cultivators through the local officials, that they were bound to carry out contracts already entered into; and in order to meet the extreme urgency of the case, hastily passed a Bill through the Legislative Council, to be in force for six months only, giving Magistrates summary jurisdiction to enforce specific performance of existing contracts to sow

indigo, and in case of refusal to assess damages payable to the planter, in default, to impose sentences of imprisonment.

Several additional magisterial officers were sent to adjudicate the cases instituted in great numbers by the planters, and hundreds of ryots were sent to prison for refusing to sow. The Nuddea gaol had to be entirely emptied of its ordinary class of criminals to make room for the influx of ryots convicted under this Act. It is probable that many of them would not have been so obstinate, had they understood that sowing this year would not render them any more liable to sow the next. A commission of inquiry was to be appointed, and to report on the whole case before the next season, as to the necessity of special measures, legislative or otherwise. But it was difficult to convey this clearly to their uneducated minds. In the meantime some very harsh and unjust decisions were passed under the Act by inexperienced Magistrates who had been hurried to the scene of affairs. There was no appeal to any judicial Court; but the Government of Bengal had a power of supervision reserved to it under the law; the Commissioner of the division could send for records of all cases tried, and refer them to the Government, for reversal or otherwise of the orders passed.

In one case a Deputy Magistrate had sentenced a ryot to imprisonment for refusal to execute a contract. After the decision the case was sent up for revision, and it appeared that the contract bore date 1856, but was executed on a stamp paper that had been sold by the stamp vendor in 1859, or three years after the alleged execution of the

deed. (I have mentioned before, that all stamp vendors are obliged by law to endorse on each stamp paper the date of sale and the name of the party to whom sold.) The defendant in this case had denied the execution of the deed, but the Magistrate had not even thought of looking at the date of sale of the stamp.

In another case a mookhtyar (attorney) was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of £20 for advising certain clients not to sow indigo. The law enacted punishments for persons preventing ryots sowing indigo by intimidation; and the Deputy Magistrate had twisted this into meaning that a lawyer could not give his clients advice in such cases. The man was of course released on the case being revised; and this magisterial officer was sent to another district, away from indigo associations.

But great excitement prevailed; it was necessary to quarter a number of military police in the districts; and this state of things lasted until the season for sowing had passed over. Sometimes the planters' party were to blame, sometimes the other. The ryots were doubtless quite without scruples, and anxious to evade the performance of what was justly due from them, as well as of that which was oppressive and illegal. Both parties were represented by associations in Calcutta, the "Indigo Planters'" and the "British Indian Association," respectively; and both of these were in constant communication with the Government of Bengal. These communications consisted largely of accusations by both sides against the Magistrates employed in the Nuddea district. This I think is tolerably good proof that these officers generally endeavoured to

perform their duties impartially. Either Association would receive letters from one of its own party, containing most extraordinary charges of unfairness and bias against a Magistrate, and would forward it without inquiry to the Lieutenant-Governor, making it a peg on which to hang a demand for the Magistrate's instant transfer to some other place. A perusal of these letters, and the results of the official inquiry made in each case, shows that the letters written by the planters were just as ill-founded and just as gross misrepresentations as those written by the natives or those who acted for them.

Throughout it may be asserted that the Bengal Government did its very best to do its duty fairly by both sides in this difficult and delicate crisis. By the time of my arrival the whole matter had settled down, the Commission had sat, and voluminous evidence had been taken. Special legislation had not been considered necessary; but the result was that some planters had been ruined, and all in this neighbourhood had been more or less impoverished. This was made by them the ground of bitter, but not justifiable, complaints against the Government. For long years of oppression, large profits had been wrung from the forced and really unremunerated labour of the ryot. The ryot was now emancipated, and those profits were no longer to be made. No doubt the ryot was lazy, deceitful, and without scruple as to evading engagements into which in many cases he had involuntarily entered, but this was not the fault of the Government; and the reaction was the fault of the one-sided nature of these contracts. Great efforts were made in the planting interest to obtain a per-

manent special law for specific performance of contracts; but it was considered that the existing regulations were sufficient. The native merchant who gave advances for the growth of oil seeds, jute, or rice had no need for such a law. There were no analogous disturbances in connection with these crops; and had the indigo crop been equally profitable to the ryot, and had he been free from the oppressions of the factory subordinates, these difficulties would not have occurred.

As I drove along I observed signs that I was in a metropolitan district. Not the least was the fact that the road was metalled. Such a thing did not exist in far-off Tirhoot, except in the towns of Mozufferpore and Durbhungah, and that in the latter I had made myself. But I was struck still more by the existence of two toll bars, things that I had not expected to find.

The entrance to the town of Kishnaghur is through an old Hindu gateway, the remains of an old fortification; and after passing through nearly a mile of narrow bazaar I debouched on the open part forming the European quarter. Another three-quarters of a mile along a tolerably shady road, past the houses with their large park-like compounds, past the ubiquitous Racket Court, and up a slight undulation, brought me to the residence of the Collector Magistrate, MacDonald, who had offered me hospitality. He was absent at office, but his wife received me most kindly; and here I stayed for six weeks, while securing a house for myself and getting it ready for habitation. Macdonald was grateful to me for joining my appointment so soon; for my predecessor had hurried off on promotion

without waiting for my arrival, and had left him with his hands over-full of work.

As Joint Magistrate, I was his first lieutenant. The district,—another sign of its being near the capital,—was divided into six subdivisions—the Sudder, or Kishnaghur, Ranaghat, Meherpore, Chooadanga, Bongong, Kooshtea. The area in square miles is 3,408, and the population, at the census taken in 1872, was found to be 1,806,102. The area of Tirhoot is 6,343, and the population 4,389,250; and yet at this time it had only one subdivision. The inhabitants here, however, were no doubt much further advanced in education and civilization, and required a more elaborate administration; and it must be observed that several of these subdivisional jurisdictions had only recently been created.

My salary now was 700 rs. a month, or, at the then rate of exchange, £840 a year. I had charge of the Sudder subdivision, in which the town of Kishnaghur was situate; and in case of MacDonald's absence I should assume temporary charge of the district. As Kishnaghur had been created a separate subdivision, all petitions involving judicial inquiry on matters arising within the subdivisional jurisdiction were presented to me, and not to the Magistrate. This caused a considerable saving of labour to him; for in districts where this arrangement had not been made, the Magistrate was obliged to receive and distribute for trial all the new institutions in criminal matters, and this occupied a good deal of time. Again, if any cases of an unusually important nature occurred in any other subdivision, the Magistrate could and did transfer them to my file for trial.

Further, under the Rent Law, Act X. of 1859, the Collector generally heard appeals from the decisions of the Deputy Collectors; but he was by the law able to delegate his powers to a Deputy Collector; and I being the head Deputy Collector of the district, appeals from other Deputies were frequently made over to me for hearing. This gave me a lot of extra work; and, in addition, many matters connected with the general administration of the District were made over to me for consideration and report. In short, I found the quantity of work here very great; but the quality was interesting, and put me through a tolerably good training for the post of Collector-Magistrate of a district.

The station society was not large, but we were not so dependent on each other for our amusements, as our accessibility from Calcutta enabled friends to come to us from thence, and us to make occasional trips to the capital. The Nuddea division, under the control of one Commissioner, consisted of the three districts of Nuddea, Jessore, and the twenty-four Pergunnahs, and his head-quarters had originally been at Kishnaghur; but the completion of the railway had altered the existing state of things, and now he resided in Calcutta, which is situated in the twenty-four Pergunnahs.

The European officials now at Kishnaghur were the Judge, Tomlinson the Collector, both married; the Civil Surgeon, the District Superintendent of Police, his Assistant, an Assistant Magistrate, who held the position that I had in Tirhoot, all bachelors; the Principal of the Kishnaghur College, an assistant Professor, and the

Clergyman,—really a member of the German Mission, but who now performed the Church of England Service for us,—these last three were all married and the fathers of marriageable daughters, so that the female society of our station exceeded its usual proportion in India.

The first thing MacDonald did, was to turn over to me, not an official, but a social duty; viz., the management of the Ice Club. I remonstrated, saying, that if I were not as hard-worked as he, I was at any rate the man in the station who came second in that respect, and it was right that somebody else should undertake this labour for the benefit of the community. "You must do it," he said. "If neither you nor I will, nobody else will; and you will find wherever you go, that the Collector and the Joint must do all this sort of thing between them, or it is not done at all. I have the Mutton Club, and you must take the other."

I acquiesced, and it may, perhaps, be as well to explain the nature of these clubs. In the Mofussil it is not possible to buy any eatable meat. Goat's flesh, it is true, is procurable; but that is not very nice; so we had to supply our own mutton, and for this purpose it was necessary to keep a flock of sheep, and "kill ourselves," as the saying is among butchers in England. We used to kill once or twice a week, as the majority of members wished, and on certain fixed days. As a sheep divided into five parts, it was necessary that the number of members should be five, or some multiple of five, so that the one sheep, or more, could be divided properly among them. At Kishnaghur the club consisted of five members only: the Judge, the

Collector, myself, who succeeded to the share of my predecessor, and the two College officials. The value of the shares to be received by an outgoing and paid by an incoming member, was based on the number of the sheep in the flock at the time of the sale. And this was quite fair; for a member who bought in cheap would soon have to pay an additional sum for the purchase of more sheep, which would not be the case with a member who bought in dear. An account was sent round monthly, showing the number of sheep in the flock, the number consumed during the month, and the amount expended in purchase of food, shepherd's wages, etc., etc., and the amount due by each member for the monthly expenses.

The sheep, when killed, was divided into the two fore-quarters, the saddle, and the two legs. Each member got each piece in rotation, he to whom the fore-quarter fell getting the head or the other odd bits; and this arrangement had the effect of controlling the station dinner-parties. A dinner at the Judge's or Collector's could be foretold, by calculating the day on which the saddle was due to them, as regularly as an eclipse of the moon by the most able astronomer. For it must be recollected that in India, except for a very few days in the cold weather, an animal must be eaten within twenty-four hours of its being killed, or less.

All this gave a good deal of trouble to the managing member; but it was child's play compared to the Ice Club.

We were just near enough to Calcutta to make it worth while to get the American ice thence, instead of employing

the usual method of cooling with saltpetre, or going to the expense of purchasing ice machines for ourselves. As Kishnaghur was the first Mofussil station that had taken ice from the American house which had the monopoly in Calcutta, we had the privilege of purchasing it at the rate of four rupees a maund, viz., eight shillings for eighty pounds. But monopolies make men insolent, and we had always to keep money in advance with the ice-house people, to meet the price of any we might order.

We also had to keep a chuprassie at Kishnaghur, who would accompany our cart, containing the empty ice chest, to Buggoolah, the railway station, send it off to Calcutta, and bring back the full chest coming down. We had to keep another chuprassie in Calcutta to receive the ice and send it off. The ice used to be sent down on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings from Calcutta, reach Buggoolah at night, and come along the twelve miles of road from Buggoolah to Kishnaghur in a bullock-cart, so as to reach Kishnaghur before sunrise. Each member of the Ice Club had to send the Secretary (myself) a statement of the ice he wanted on each occasion. The quantities were calculated in seers of two pounds each, and no one could take a less quantity than five seers at a time. A member ordering ice on a Monday, had to calculate the amount he would require from Wednesday morning till Friday morning; and on Wednesdays, from Friday morning till Tuesday, as no ice was sent out on Sundays.

The Secretary had to make a calculation of the allowance to be made for wastage on the way; and it was found that an allowance of one-fifth on the whole quantity

approximately met this. But the wastage, of course, differed very much on different occasions, in accordance with the state of the weather; and when the ice arrived, it was necessary to weigh the whole quantity first, to see what amount each member could fairly receive. Occasionally it was more, occasionally it was less, than the quantity he had ordered. This calculation made, the division commenced; not a very easy task, as it is rather difficult to cut off from a lump of ice the exact quantity required. The servants of the various members stood round with their blankets, and when they received their lump, wrapped it tightly up, and hurried home with it. At least, that was what they ought to have done; but occasionally they loitered, the ice would melt, and I used to get letters from members, stating that they had not received their fair share. However, I could always treat these notes in a high-handed manner by threatening to resign the secretaryship, which I would very gladly have done.

At the end of every month, an account was sent round, showing the amount due by each member for the ice ordered, plus one-fifth allowance, at four rupees per maund, and his share of the expenses of the chuprassies, carts, railway freight, repairs to box, blankets, sawdust, etc., etc. Ice, therefore, was not enjoyed in Kishnaghur without some expense to all, and considerable trouble to one member of the club. On one occasion I recollect I had, through an oversight, omitted to send money in advance to the ice-house in Calcutta, and the surly manager allowed our chest and cart to return empty. It was very hot weather, and MacDonald had a dinner-party, so that I fear my name

was not mentioned with respect for three whole days in the station.

The first piece of miscellaneous official work I had to do was to report on the administration of the cattle pounds in the district. These were established under Act III. of 1857, which law was partially an outcome of the indigo disturbances. In Bengal, no land is specially set apart as pasture, and the unfortunate cattle have to graze where they can. Growing indigo suffered a good deal from their depredations; and the factory servants used, in the Nuddea district, to carry off some hundreds of cattle at a time to the factory pound, and make very serious demands on the pockets of the owners before giving them up. On the other hand, they used occasionally to make raids on recalcitrant villages that refused to cultivate indigo, and carry off the cattle, under the pretence that they had been trespassing.

This state of things led to frequent riots and affrays; and as a law on the subject was much wanted all over India, Act III. of 1857 was passed, which provided for the establishment of cattle pounds, for a tariff of fines for animals caught trespassing, and for the procedure to be adopted by the party on whose land they were found, and by the owners for their recovery. The scale of fines is as follows: camel or buffalo, 1*s.*; horse, bull, or cow, 6*d.*; calf or ass, 3*d.*; sheep or goat, 1½*d.*

The owner could only recover his cattle or other animals impounded, by payment of the fines, and a certain sum per day for their keep, to be fixed by the Magistrate within fourteen days. If not claimed within the legal

period, they were put up to auction, and the surplus proceeds, after payment of the fines and feeding expenses, handed over to the owner. Should no owner appear, the amount was sent in to head-quarters, and credited to the Pound Fund account. But this law gave rise to numerous classes of cases. Under the Act, sums realized by fines or sales of cattle could be awarded as compensation to any person suffering from the results of cattle trespass; but the injured party could also institute a civil suit for damages. There was also a section providing punishment for the rescue of cattle on their way to the pound or from the pound itself, charges under which were very frequent indeed.

In fact, very few persons would take the trouble to drive fifty or a hundred cattle even a mile to a public pound, or even a very small number a longer distance; and as many places were seven or eight miles from the nearest, it was found much easier to bring a charge of cattle rescue against the owners of the cattle seen to be trespassing, and so get them punished, than to follow the more troublesome method of impounding their cattle.

Then, again, arose the charges of illegal impounding. The law, too, was made the vehicle of many false complaints. There were also the charges by the impounders against the pound-keepers, of releasing cattle to their owners without taking the proper fines, not entering them in their registers, but accepting a smaller sum as a bribe instead; and by the owners against the same officials of refusing to release their cattle, except on payment of exorbitant sums, under the head of feeding expenses.

In the Nuddea district there were forty-seven pounds; and the chief point for my consideration and report was whether it was advisable to retain all these, or to change the sites of some, or abolish them altogether. By Act V. of 1860, we magistrates were allowed to devote any surplus proceeds arising from fines or sale of unclaimed cattle and remaining after due provision had been made for the salaries of the pound-keepers and the construction and conservation of pounds, to the repairs of our roads and bridges. Our roads we looked upon as our children, and they cost us a great deal of paternal anxiety. If any pound did not pay its own expenses, it would become a tax on the proceeds of the rest, and thus diminish any surplus that might possibly be available for roads. I was not yet a District Magistrate, and so could not look upon them as my own children; but yet I had a very keen sympathy with them, and it required considerable self-control to decide impartially between retaining a bankrupt pound in merely local interests, and saving money for urgently-required road repairs. But I hope my report, which was adopted in its integrity, was based on impartial considerations.

The next administrative work I had to do was to examine and report upon the working of the Zemindarree dâk system in the district. The Zemindarree dâk means the intra-district postal arrangements, for the expenses of which the land-holders of the district are bound to find the means. In December in each year the Magistrate, under Act VIII. of 1862, frames a budget estimate of the amount that will be required for this

service for the following year, and this is assessed rateably on the revenue payable to Government by each land-holder. My predecessor had been asked to look into the matter, but had merely reported that he did not think that the charges in Nuddea were higher than those in the neighbouring districts. But it appeared to me not only that they were so, but that they were capable of considerable reduction without interfering with the efficiency of the service.

The Zemindarree dâk is merely for the conveyance of letters between the Magistrate of the district and the other magisterial and police stations. At each station there is a postal official called a dâk moonshee and the letters are carried by runners. The Imperial postal service is of course for the whole of India, and at this time was concerned with scarcely more than communication between towns on the lines of rail and the trunk roads; but it was gradually progressing, and feeling its way into the interior by setting up experimental post offices at some of the larger villages; the test of the necessity of such offices being the equilibrium of receipts and expenses.

Besides the dâk moonshees in the interior, there is a head clerk at head-quarters, who supervises the accounts and prepares the yearly budget. On going into the matter I found that in many cases both Imperial postal and Zemindarree dâk offices existed, and that there were actually two sets of runners, one set carrying the Zemindarree dâk letters, and the other the Imperial postal correspondence. This is absolutely contrary to the law.

I also found that between stations where there was communication by the Eastern Bengal Railway dâk wallahs were still running and carrying letters. It was, therefore, possible to abolish a good many dâk moonshees and a good many runners; and by making use of the rail and the services of the Imperial postal officials, I was able to reduce the annual milage expenditure from 17 rs. per mile to 13 rs. The Zemindars were the parties who gained by this, for, of course, Government did not benefit one farthing; but it was strictly equitable that they should not be called upon to pay more than was really necessary. I fear, however, that it brought down on my head the anathemas of many unfortunate dâk moonshees and dâk runners; and a great many difficulties were thrown in the way of my economical reforms by them, and very specially by the clerk at head-quarters, who naturally wished to exercise a cheap patronage. However, he was not a deserving public servant, and I settled that part of the difficulty by abolishing him.

The word "abolish" has been much in request during the last twenty years in India; and so sadly familiar to the native official class, that it has become incorporated in their language. My scheme went up to the Bengal Government with the recommendations of the Magistrate and the Commissioner, and was adopted, and I received the official thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor; but in the end of the letter a mark of his appreciation of my labours was conferred upon me, which I could imagine the secretary writing out with a cynical smile. Just

at this time, the control of the Zemindarree dâk arrangements was throughout Lower Bengal to be made over to the new police; but, "in consideration of my services in the matter, I was allowed to retain the management in the Nuddea district."

I could not help laughing when I read this; but of course I understood that it was thought advisable that the official who had suggested the economical reforms should see them carried out at first.

Another thing that gave me an infinity of trouble was the gaol. The Magistrate of the district was supposed to have charge of it; but he was allowed to delegate this responsibility to a subordinate, and he made it over to me. The medical charge rested with the Civil Surgeon, Eardley. But this divided charge did not work very well. It was, of course, my object to feed the prisoners cheaply, to get as much work out of them as I could, and to find the best market for my manufactured articles. It was Eardley's object to have them all in good health. We both sent in monthly returns to the Inspector General of gaols, who in these days was a doctor, and who, in case of dispute, was naturally inclined to side with the Civil Surgeon. My returns, which were very elaborate, showed the number of prisoners in gaol, their crimes, re-committals, employments in gaol, and all statistics about manufactured articles, profit and loss accounts, etc., etc. Eardley's returns related to their health, ethnological and physiological statistics. They were very elaborate also.

Indeed, I may say that most Indian official returns

are elaborate, too much so, and that we provincial officials suffered many things at the hands of Secretaries in Calcutta, who were continually planning cunning forms with innumerable headings for us to fill up on every possible subject. We were always being asked, Why? Frequently, a question to which it was impossible to give a decisive reply.

There were about 500 prisoners in the gaol, and if more than 3 per cent. were in hospital, Eardley had to say why. All this was done according to form. For if fifteen were in hospital, he was not obliged to give any explanation; but if sixteen, he had to give some special reason. Perhaps he would say that the rice supplied was too new, or that the ventilation of some ward was defective, and then I was called upon to say why the rice was new, or why the ward ventilation was defective. And I often found it very difficult to give any plausible reason. It was therefore very necessary to be on friendly terms with the Civil Surgeon; and as Eardley was somewhat crotchety, though in the main an excellent fellow, I found at first this portion of my work rather difficult. However, I won his heart by a stroke of promptitude.

There was a short piece of road between the main gate of the gaol and the hospital along which he had to drive every morning,—he was no horseman,—and about which he had entered many complaints in his "Remark Book," as being very much out of repair. His complaints were just, and after I had had charge of the gaol about three weeks he had to go into the interior of the district for three or four days to look after some

outlying Government dispensaries. There was an old masonry outbuilding of the gaol condemned to be pulled down, and as soon as his back was turned I set every available prisoner to work, got it down, spread the *débris* on the road, had it rolled; and when he next drove along it, the wheels of his buggy rolled smoothly along a "pucka" or metalled highway, instead of bumping in deep holes or muddy pools. He was both surprised and pleased, wrote to me that I had accomplished in three days what he had been trying to get done for three years; and from that time he was my ally, and not my opponent in gaol matters.

But alas! my promptitude led me into trouble with Mowbray, the Inspector General. The repairs of this bit of road had not been entered in the budget for the current year, and it cost me a ream of correspondence to get the matter finally settled.

Indeed, about this time Mowbray gave a great deal of trouble; for, after years of incubation, he had thought out a scheme of gaol clothing for the prisoners in Bengal. Hitherto there had been no convict uniform, and the prisoners were allowed to wear a certain amount of their old clothes, and others were supplied when these were worn out. It was now resolved to issue clothing to all prisoners of one make and shape; but with differently coloured checks and stripes for the different classes of crime. The idea was good, but the introduction of this clothing was accompanied by difficulties that an English official could not believe possible.

The new uniform consisted of a jacket coming half-

way down the thigh, and a pair of drawers (pyjamas) which came half down the leg below the knee.

Now, it must be explained that when we commit a man to prison in India, we do nothing which puts him out of caste. If he be a Brahmin, he has his food cooked by a Brahmin, and is not compelled to do any labour that would injure his caste. This principle is carried out rigidly, and it can be easily imagined how troublesome it is. But it is not thought right for the civil power to injure a man's prospects hereafter, as a punishment for breaking our law.

In Nuddea, too, Hinduism is strong; and the town of Nuddea, situate some six miles distant from Kishnaghur, is a great stronghold of Brahminism. When information reached the prisoners that this new clothing was to be distributed, they appeared to be much excited; and in a few days I received a petition from the Hindus, saying they could not possibly wear it, as by the laws of Manu they were forbidden to partake of food while wearing any garment with a seam in it, and that the Brahmin priests were not allowed to wear anything with a seam in it at all.

I forwarded this petition to the Inspector General for orders, and received a truly official reply, to the effect "that in the introduction of the new clothing, I was to give due weight to all good and well-founded objections, but not to listen to those that were trivial and frivolous, and on no account to allow any disturbance."

I consulted MacDonald, and we agreed to force the lower castes to wear the clothing always, but to allow

the higher priestly caste prisoners to discard their drawers at meals and put on their old waist cloths, or dhotees, which were of one piece without seam.

But as soon as I had settled this, I received a petition from the Mohammedan prisoners to the effect that they could not wear the new clothing, as, according to the Koran, they must cover their heels with their clothes when kneeling to pray, and that both the jacket and drawers were too short for this purpose. When I told MacDonald of this, he thought fit to consult the Moulvie, the chief authority on Mohammedan law in the town. To our dismay, he replied that the objection was a just one. On this, I reported this petition to the Inspector General, but received the same reply. I then bethought myself of asking officers in the neighbouring districts of Jessore and the twenty-four Pergunnahs, and found that the Mohammedans had not raised this objection there; so, after consultation with MacDonald, we agreed to ignore it.

We then determined on a day on which to issue the clothing, keeping the prisoners ignorant of the date; and on the morning chosen, having a double guard at the gate, and a double guard inside with fixed bayonets, MacDonald and I went down to the gaol just before it was the time for the first meal, made all the prisoners sit in rows, and had a suit of clothing put before each. At first no one consented to put them on; so we pitched upon a low-caste Hindu and told him to put on his jacket at once, on pain of being flogged. He declined, so we had him tied up to the triangles, making the preparations as lengthy as

possible. He was stubborn, and the executioner had his cane raised for the first cut, when he called out that he would give in. This had a very good effect; and to our great gratification all the Mohammedans, to whom we had not communicated the Moulvie's decision, merely informing them that Mohammedans in the neighbouring districts had adopted the clothing without difficulty, consented unanimously to wear it.

With the Hindus we had great difficulty; but the allowance of the "dhotee" at meal-time conciliated most of the high-caste men, and we saw them slowly and reluctantly put on their clothes. One or two low-caste individuals were noisily refractory, and we had to tie up one more man; but he also gave way before the first stroke descended, and finally we had the satisfaction of seeing them all clothed and eating, with the exception of one old Brahmin priest, Tara Churn Acharjya.

He was in for life for murder (I don't know why he had not been transported); but though his conscience had allowed him to commit this crime, it would not permit him to wear the jacket with a seam in it. This proceeding had already occupied us about three hours, and we had to go off to our other duties; but I spoke to Eardley about this old priest, and he said, "Many of those fellows are in the habit of fasting for several days at the commencement of every month, and I dare say this man could go nearly a week without food. But I will watch him and let you know when I think he must be made to take nourishment."

The old man swallowed nothing for three days, but on the fourth morning Eardley said, "I think he had better

be fed." I had formed my plan, so I asked him to lend me a stomach-pump, which he did. I then got the old man into the gaoler's office and had his own lota (brass cup) filled with milk by one of his own caste. "Now," I said, "drink this."

"No," he said; "kill me, if you please, but I will not drink."

"Very well," I replied, "if you don't eat or drink you will die. I personally do not care about that. But if you die the Government will call upon me for explanations and that will be troublesome. If you like, you can drink this milk comfortably out of your own lota filled by a man of your own caste, and you will keep your caste; but if you do not, I shall have to force food into your stomach through this machine, and you will lose your caste. I give you five minutes to decide." And so saying I walked away. In about three minutes a man came to say that the old priest wanted to speak to me. So I went back. He said, "I will drink; but let me do a little poojah (perform a little religious ceremony) first."

"No," I said; "you must take one sip directly, and after that you may do as much poojah as you like."

He hesitated, and I held out my watch, for the five minutes was really up. He stretched out his hand for the lota, and took a sip. The spell was broken, and I never had any more trouble with him or any other prisoner on the score of the new clothing.

Both MacDonald and myself had expected some trouble from the sympathy of the town's people; but though, there was a good deal of "talkee talkee" in the bazaar, there was

no visible demonstration, and this made matters much easier for us.

My troubles with the gaol, however, were by no means over. The gaoler was a low-caste man, a Paramanick, appointed by my predecessor; and the deputy gaoler was a Brahmin. All the subordinates were Hindus, and this deputy exercised considerable influence over them. Between them they got up a charge of peculation against the gaoler. This of course was first brought before me in the shape of an anonymous petition, which stated that the writer was a well-wisher to the Government, but was afraid to sign his name openly, as the gaoler was powerful and violent. That he was in the habit of not entering all manufactured articles, but selling a large quantity and pocketing the proceeds himself. That the deputy gaoler was a very honest man, and wished to enter everything himself; but that the gaoler, to carry out his own wicked plans, used to tear leaves out of the manufacture account book. The petition then proceeded to point out various items in which defalcations would be found, and wound up by some very minute and disgusting details about the gaoler's private life.

I was obliged to go into this matter, and it necessitated my going through the whole of the gaol account. I had also to count over all the manufactured articles in stock, and the raw materials, and make elaborate calculations as to their relative amounts. We manufactured castor and mustard oil from crushing the seed, cane chairs, bamboo matting, jute sacks, tent carpets, and various other things, and also let out short-term prisoners for hire; so that the

accounts were complicated enough. At first things looked all wrong for the gaoler, and I was obliged to suspend him. I shall never forget his agony when he came to me and implored me not to put him in gaol; and it certainly would have been the refinement of cruelty to put him among his former prisoners. I explained to him that at present there was no magisterial or police charge against him, but that it was necessary for a complete and impartial inquiry, that his control over gaol matters should cease for a time, but that he would be present during the whole proceedings.

The inquiry occupied me many days, for my Court work engaged me from 10 till nearly 6 p.m. every day, and I could only go at this in the mornings and evenings. But though a great many jute bags appeared to be missing at first, and a large quantity of oil to be deficient, and the earnings of sundry prisoners who had been let out for hire not entered, gradually these items were all satisfactorily explained. The account was found with two pages torn out, and the gaoler admitted that he had torn them himself; but he said that he did so one day when he had lost his temper with the deputy, who had made certain entries in an improper manner, notwithstanding his express orders to the contrary. The missing leaves were found, and corroborated his statement. Finally I was able to arrive at the certain conclusion, that though the gaoler had been careless and unmethodical, he had been honest, and that the gaol had lost nothing by him. The deputy could have explained everything, had he so chosen, and saved me hours of labour. But it was clear from his eagerness in the inquiry and the

malicious delight in his face when things seemed all wrong at first, that he was the moving spirit if not the actual writer of the petition. So I dismissed him, saying that it was impossible that he could work properly as the gaoler's subordinate. He of course appealed to the Inspector General against my order, and this cost me another long report. But I had my will of him. The gaoler came to me privately and put his head on my feet, and told me in most pathetic language that I had saved his life and his family from ruin. As I was convinced of his honesty, this was satisfactory.

But still my support of him gave me continual trouble. His caste was against him. The dismissed deputy had friends and relations among the clerks in the Inspector General's office, and during the eighteen months that I was in Kishnaghur I do not think that one of my monthly returns escaped being sent back for correction of some petty error which could have been made in the head office without any trouble whatever. But I must add that in three other districts afterwards I had gaols under my immediate charge, that in every one I had similar trouble, though not in every case with similar results.

I may state here a curious case that occurred in connection with the gaol. Low-caste Hindus who died and whose friends did not claim their bodies, were thrown into the sacred stream of the Jellinghee, which runs past the town. A low-caste man, a "dome," was employed to throw them in; and a new piece of cloth was supplied to wrap round their loins, so that they might not be indecent. Our dome was suspected of stealing these pieces of cloth; and he was

watched on the occasion of the death from apoplexy of rather a stout prisoner. He was seen not only to steal the cloth but to cut a piece out of the plumpest part of the dead body before throwing it into the river. His hut was near the river bank, and he was further watched and seen to cook and eat this. He was then arrested and brought before me for trial. It now occurred to me for the first time, that no punishment was provided in our Penal Code for cannibalism. I then bethought myself that I could punish him for stealing the cloth; but then the question arose, as to whose property the cloth was. However, I decided that it belonged to the gaol, and sentenced him to a month's imprisonment with hard labour, and dismissed him from his post.

It was at Kishnaghur that I first had to superintend the execution of criminals. It so happened that three convicts were to be hung on the same morning. Two of them were Hindus who had been convicted of an atrocious river dacoity. These river dacoits are a sort of inland pirates, who go about in swift boats and attack the unwieldy, lumbering, barge-like merchant vessels, which are altogether dependent on wind and stream for movement. In the network of mighty streams which flow through the various channels formed by the Ganges and Brahmapootra in forcing their way to the sea, there are great facilities for this species of crime. This case had occurred in the Kooshtea subdivision. The dacoits had attacked a merchant boat and killed five men on board, leaving only a small boy alive. They had then sent it adrift, but it had got stranded near a village, and when

finally boarded by the villagers the deck was found literally floating in blood. The small boy was taken care of and had been able to recognize two of the dacoits as coming from a village near his own. Their houses were searched, and those of their mistresses, and in the latter was found some of the stolen property. This evidence was enough to hang them.

The other case was that of a Mohammedan who had killed his wife with a hatchet in a fit of anger because she had not got his dinner ready when he came home from his work in the evening. This poor wretch had a very short time to live after the commission of his crime, for he was brought before me on the following day. I committed him to the Sessions Court, which was then sitting, and he was tried two days afterwards and convicted. The sentence of death was confirmed by the High Court in two days more, and the date of execution was fixed for three days afterwards.

The arrangements for execution were rather primitive. The gallows was formed of two palm-tree posts with a beam across the top, and a platform connected by a hinge with this beam, and supported in front by two bamboos cut for the occasion, which had to be pulled away by hand when the signal was given. The Hindus preferred a prayer to me that they might not be hung on the same scaffold as the Mohammedan ; and so I had to get a second made.

The candidates for the post of executioner were numerous, and it was necessary to engage three ; but the pay was low, only 5rs., or 10*s.* each. I was responsible for all details,

and I felt it incumbent upon me to be very careful; for natives, both Hindu and Mohammedan, appear to have no sympathy with pain, and would be altogether indifferent to any avoidable agony that might be inflicted by want of care in a case like this. I therefore looked after the ropes and everything. The executioners appeared to consider the whole thing as a joke. For myself, the night before the execution was not an agreeable one. It was to take place at 7 a.m. in the open grass-plain just outside the gaol walls. I rode down about half an hour before, and found about 1,000 spectators assembled. They had seated themselves in a circle in the most orderly manner possible. There were two constables only on the ground, and their presence was not required. But on my way down I saw an ayah wheeling two European children in a double perambulator to the scene. On coming up to them, I found them to be the grandchildren of the Clergyman. I sent her back in somewhat of a fright, I hope.

On coming to the gaol I found the Hindus perfectly calm. All they asked for was a last pipe before death. The Mohammedan was in a great state of terror. The Hindus walked firmly to the gallows, repeating the name of their god, "Ram," over and over again, the Mohammedan tottered, and could only repeat, "I know nothing." At length all was ready and I myself gave the signal for the four men standing by to pull away the bamboo posts. The platform of the Hindus fell, but one of the posts which supported the Mohammedan's platform stuck, and it only came down with a slant on one side. I myself then pulled the rope in my anxiety to shorten the man's agony, and he died

almost without a struggle. The bodies by law hung an hour. Eardley certified that they were really dead, and they were then cut down. I shall never forget the dull thud with which they came to the ground. In fact all the horrid details impressed themselves upon me in a most disagreeably vivid manner. Men who have seen scores hung and blown from guns during the Mutiny would probably laugh at this. But I had to do it all in cold blood and with long preparation.

My house, in which I got settled some six weeks after my arrival, was a very nice one, and much better than that at Durbhungah. Like all the houses at Kishnaghur, it was situate in a large park-like compound of some nine or ten acres; but there was no flower or vegetable garden, and these I proceeded to have made under my own supervision. The rains were just setting in, so that the ground was soft for ploughing; and by the end of August both were ready for the reception of seeds. I had fondly flattered myself that I could let out the grazing of my compound, and get at least a supply of milk in return from the owners of the numerous cattle in the town. But I soon found that the grazing was forcibly taken, and that make what efforts I might I should get nothing for it.

As I have mentioned before, there are no pasture grounds for cattle in Bengal; and the animals having to feed where they can, the temptation of our small parks was irresistible. Their instincts, too, were preternaturally sharpened by necessity; no fences or gates such as could be constructed by the means at my disposal would keep them out, and it was almost impossible to catch them. At first

I was very determined, kept men specially to catch cattle and take them to the pound. But I thereby only enriched the municipality, partially at my own expense; for the proceeds of the fines taken at the pounds situate within the town were the property of the town commissioners. Finally I gave in, as I found everybody else had been compelled to do; and the cattle roamed freely over my pasture, not altogether harmfully, for, though they consumed the grass, they kept down the jungle, no small benefit in Bengal.

It was very pleasant to be in a head-quarter station after the loneliness of my subdivisional life at Durbhungah. We had of course a racket court, built in the old style; a vast plain of masonry, with a huge front wall, and two shortish side walls, and no back. The amount of exertion necessary to keep up a good ace in this was very tremendous. Tomlinson and MacDonald used to play against the Assistant Magistrate Quinlan and myself, and we were very closely matched. The Billiard Club, a small bungalow, was close to the court, and from this we obtained our refreshments at the close of our game, generally consisting of iced brandy and soda, for the Billiard Club was a member of the Ice Club. We seldom got more than three-quarters of an hour's play; for though Quinlan had plenty of leisure, the rest of us did not manage to get out of Court till after 6 p.m., and before 7, even in the longest days it grew too dark to see the ball.

We devoted two nights a week to croquet, for the satisfaction of the ladies. MacDonald had a piece of his grounds kept in order for the purpose, and we met there.

Occasionally Quinlan was seduced from a regular racket night by a *billet doux* despatched early in the afternoon; and then we three could only gnash our teeth and follow his example, for the court was too big for one to play singly against the other two. There are drawbacks to croquet, which rouses anger in the very gentlest breasts; but yet it was pleasant to meet every member of the station society who chose to come, and most did choose to come, in a friendly way after the labours of the day. Indeed, we became devoted to the game; and frequently as we men had to commence late, and the ladies thought a late game with men was better than an early one without them, dinners were put off, lanterns were brought out, and quinine with sherry, as a preventive of fever, served round, in order to enable us to finish some exciting struggle.

There was also a race course; but since the indigo disturbances there had been no races. The planters had ceased to support them; and without them it was not possible to keep them up. MacDonald and I had serious thoughts of attempting to resuscitate them, and devoted several mornings to modifying certain over-sharp curves in the course; but we found it hopeless to get up a successful meeting, and so gave it up. The course was always useful for a pleasant gallop, and we spent a small sum in keeping it in repair and free from rat-holes.

Our rackets and our croquet were occasionally broken in upon by a considerable nuisance, in the person of the Rajah of Kishnaghur. He was a young Hindu of the highest possible caste, and belonging to one of the oldest

families in Bengal. His ancestors had been lords of the greater part of the Nuddea and some portion of the neighbouring districts. Their bad management and foolish extravagance had brought them to the verge of bankruptcy; and their ruin would have been complete had not the present man's father died, leaving him quite a child. As in the case of the Durbhungah estate, this also was taken under the Court of Wards; and the result was, that the just debts had been paid off and a fair income assured to the minor on his coming of age. He had been educated in Calcutta; but unfortunately, after becoming his own master, had got into dissipated habits and fallen among dissolute companions, many of them idle and thoughtless military men, whom he used to invite to his palace, where a good deal of debauchery used to go on.

The palace was a curious old Hindu building, with the remains of strongly-built fortifications, and containing innumerable small rooms. He used to give dinner-parties, the meal being served in the European fashion, and I accepted his hospitality two or three times. We officials thought it rather a duty not to refuse his invitations, as we wished to assist as far as we could in keeping up his respectability; but these entertainments were rather a penance, and the Rajah was generally a little overcome with drink before the end of the evening. We were also terribly tortured with the strains of what he was pleased to call his band, consisting of six performers who were furnished with some old instruments purchased from some European regiment, with which they played snatches of six different tunes simultaneously, each performer knowing

apparently a bit of one tune, which he executed as loudly as he could. Native ears can distinguish nothing but a confused noise in European music, so that the Rajah thought this as good as anything else of the sort.

He was of such high caste that nothing could put him out of it; that is, I suppose, that nobody was of sufficiently high caste to censure him for breaking laws and ritual. He could therefore eat and drink with us without detriment; and he could also restore outcasts of a lower grade than his own by a touch. Every time that I dined there, there was a certain farce gone through. A venerable-looking Hindu was brought in and was ordered to drink a bottle of beer opened expressly for him. He refused, protested he would sooner die than break his caste in this way, whereupon the Rajah would draw his sword, which he kept by him, and threaten to kill him. At length the man would yield, and putting the bottle to his lips drink it off, turn it upside down to show there was not a drop left, make his bow, and leave the room. The Rajah was supposed to restore him to caste on each occasion; but he must have had considerable practice to drink off the contents of a quart bottle without taking his lips from the mouth.

Yet there was some good about the Rajah. He had a sense of gentlemanlike feeling, and he was naturally of an affectionate disposition. For many years he was married to one wife only, and was sincerely attached to her; but unfortunately there was no child, and it became absolutely necessary for him, in accordance with the ordinances of his religion, to take unto himself a second spouse, in order to

obtain an heir. I was informed that his grief at this was very genuine, and that his sympathy with his first wife's feelings in the matter was something quite unusual in an Oriental.

We had to thank an ancestor of his, however, for a much greater nuisance than himself, and that was the tribe of monkeys with which we were afflicted at Kishnaghur. Orthodox Hindus look upon monkeys as sacred animals, because they are reported to have assisted Ram in his invasion of Ceylon. There is a species of small monkey indigenous to this part of Bengal, not numerous, and harmless. But the Rajah above mentioned procured a pair of the Lungoor tribe from the jungles of the North-East, and had their marriage ceremony performed with great pomp and enormous expense. Their descendants bred and multiplied in the neighbourhood, and had now become so numerous as to be a subject of serious anxiety to us human residents. They were doubtless interesting to observe, but the amount of food they required and the damage they did more than counterbalanced anything to be allowed to their credit on that score.

When full-grown and standing upright, they were about five feet high; their faces were covered with greyish hair, which made them look like old men. They generally went about in groups of fifteen or twenty, or more, though I have found them alone and in pairs. They were easily frightened away by men, but bold and fierce enough with women or children. They went about the bazaar as freely as they did about the gardens and suburbs. It was no unusual thing for a monkey to seat himself on the roof of

a hut and watch a lone widow woman cook her food. He would wait patiently till she turned it out of the cooking pot into the plate to cool, would then jump down and snatch away plate and all, jump on to the roof with it, and eat it leisurely while she filled the air with shrieks and unavailing lamentations. When the contents of the plate were finished, he would condescend to throw it down and proceed elsewhere for further forage. Sometimes several would combine, and attack women and children carrying baskets of grain or other food, and plunder them, and if resisted would tear their clothes and bite and maul them very severely.

There was one remarkably fine avenue of "peepul" (fig) at Kishnaghur which they very particularly affected, and where they delighted to keep pace with any horseman passing underneath, springing from branch to branch above his head. I was told that on one occasion a monkey missed his hold and actually fell on the head of the horse of a planter cantering along this. The horse ran away, and carrying his rider against the branch of a tree, he was killed on the spot.

For my own part I found them terrible robbers of my vegetable garden when it came into bearing in November. In vain did I forbid my servants to encourage them, for they used to come in numbers to the cook-house and receive broken pieces of bread and other things. They were really very like human beings. I was one day watching an old female monkey who had a young one by her side to whom she was giving small bits of a piece of bread which she had evidently just received from my cook-room,

and with which she was regaling herself at the same time. Occasionally the little monkey would endeavour to snatch a bit of the bread before she was ready to give it him, when she would administer correction in the shape of a gentle box on the ear. She was in the act of doing this when one of my servants happened to come out. At once her demeanour changed. She snatched the little one to her bosom with every appearance of extreme maternal solicitude, and did not put him down again until the man had retreated. On another occasion I saw a very plucky dog of mine chasing a herd of monkeys out of my compound. One of them got as far as the hedge, and feeling safe from any aid from me, waited for the dog, who came barking up, gave him a box on the ear which sent him rolling over and over, then sprang up a tree close by and chattered defiance at him.

I conversed with several native residents on the subject, and they all complained bitterly of the nuisance. The result of the various conversations was, that a petition was presented to the municipal Commissioners (Act III. of 1864 was in full working order here), praying that steps might be taken to destroy the monkeys. This petition was signed by a large number of Mohammedans and a few Hindus. Eardley was vice-chairman of the municipal commissioners, while I was only an ordinary member; but, as usual, we civilians had to do everything that had to be done, so a resolution was passed that steps should be taken to destroy the monkeys, and I was requested to see it put into execution. I hired a Mohammedan to shoot them.

The bargain I made with this man was of a somewhat

complicated and peculiar nature. At first I wished to pay him so much per head for every monkey killed; but this he declined, saying he could not be sure of shooting straight enough to pay for his powder and shot. Finally, I agreed to pay him at the rate of 2*s.* per day, but to deduct 6*d.* for each monkey less than four that he brought to my office, and to pay 3*d.* for every extra dead monkey over four. Some days he was very successful, and would bring me sixteen or twenty dead monkeys. They were delivered every afternoon at my Court, and one ear cut off each head, to prevent the same corpses being exhibited twice over. It was a most distasteful task, seeing this done, for they really looked like a cart-load of human corpses; and several times I saw a dead mother with a dead child still clasped in her arms, the two having been killed at one shot.

I only once shot a monkey myself. They had been irritating me very much for a week or two, and doing great damage to my flower garden. One day I saw a big old grey-faced fellow sitting on the branch of a fig-tree in my garden, so I got my gun and shot him in the chest. He came tumbling down just like a black man, not quite dead; and to my surprise another, a female whom I had not observed, came down after him, and mourned over him, putting her hand to the wound, and altogether disregarding me when I attempted to drive her off. I turned away quite sick at heart, though I first satisfied myself that the wounded creature was really dead. What became of the body I never knew. It disappeared; but I never had any inclination to shoot another monkey, do what damage they might.

Their slaughter went on for about ten days, when a letter came down to MacDonald from the Bengal Government, calling for an explanation of a petition forwarded from the Kishnaghur Hindus, stating that their religious feelings were much shocked by this monkey murder, and praying that it might be stopped. I prepared a reply, and with it was forwarded a copy of the first petition presented by the Mohammedan residents. The Government finally sent down instructions that we Commissioners should not take upon ourselves to kill the monkeys, but that the public of Kishnaghur should be informed that each and every individual was at liberty to kill as many as he liked in his private capacity. And so the monkeys gained the day, for the individual natives who would exert themselves sufficiently to kill one were few and far between. I found on carefully examining the Hindu petition forwarded to the Government, that the signatures were nearly all those of men who were merely lodgers in the town, and who had no gardens or fruit-trees liable to damage. They had therefore found this a cheap way of obtaining a reputation for orthodoxy.

I may here mention that we were a good deal troubled with snakes at Kishnaghur. There is a species called by the natives "damun," generally about six or seven feet long, which were very numerous here, and did considerable damage to the poultry. One Sunday morning I was breakfasting with MacDonald and discussing sundry affairs of state when our attention was attracted by the screaming of a pair of "minas," some little birds who had a nest in the branch of a dead tree just outside the window. We

went out and saw a large "damun" with his body coiled round the branch and his head in the nest, really wallowing among the young ones. The parent birds were flying round his head, venturing an occasional peck, and screaming wildly. I could see two lumps in the creature's throat, indicating the whereabouts of two little ones that had already been swallowed. MacDonald got his gun and fired. The snake slowly uncoiled itself and fell writhing to the ground with one little mina only half-swallowed. But it was dead. We despatched the robber, and found he measured just seven feet. Mrs. MacDonald came running out, prepared to give us a lecture on this sabbath-breaking; but forgave us when she saw the cause.

Another time in my own compound I saw one of these snakes with about half his body concealed in a hole in the ground, in which he was evidently searching for prey. I sent into the house for my gun, and shot that part of the body which was visible. The remainder then wriggled itself out of the hole; and when I had killed it I waited to see if anything would come out, but nothing appeared. So I had the hole dug up; and at a depth of about three feet found an old toad whose saviour I had unwittingly been. These snakes are not poisonous, though the natives assert that they sting very severely with their tails. But I never could find an authentic instance of any person who had been stung by them.

There were also plenty of cobras. One evening, Mrs. MacDonald was taking me out for an airing, and on driving down my compound I saw a cobra glide into a hole. I proposed to stop and have it dug out, to which she con-

sented. The gardener was called, and began digging. At the depth of a foot we came to the remains of a frog. A little lower, to a dead cockroach,—at this sight I felt almost inclined to spare the snake,—and then the hole narrowed, and finally the head of the snake came darting out at each stroke of the spade. Here the gardener performed a feat which I would not have done for all the wealth of Ind. He asked me to attract the snake's attention by continuing to use the spade, and then, getting behind the hole, he watched the head dart out, and, seizing the opportunity, caught the body just at the back of the head between his second and third fingers, held it tightly, and drew the creature out. It was powerless, for it could not turn its head to strike; but the least slip would have been fatal. It was under two feet long; but the venom of a small cobra is as deadly as that of a large one. He then took the spade from me, threw the snake down, and cut it in half at one blow. I gave him one rupee as a present for his skill and pluck, at which he was both surprised and pleased. Mrs. MacDonald had turned quite pale. She told me afterwards that it was a long time before she could get out of her head the remains of the frog, the dead cockroach, and finally the angry head of the snake darting out when brought to bay.

CHAPTER II.

AT KISHNAGHUR.

RENT SUITS.—PALANQUIN DÂK.—A CONTRETEMPS WITH A CLERICAL DIGNITARY.—CRIMINAL WORK.—A BRAHMIN THIEF.—NATIVE JURY.—A CURIOUS VERDICT.—BRIBERY.—A CONFESSING BURGLAR.—FAMINE.—GRAIN DACOITIES.—ARBORICULTURE.—HOME ON MEDICAL LEAVE.

THE hours I actually spent in Court in Kishnaghur in trying cases were very long. The rent suits were numerous, and many of them very complicated, and I had to hear a great number of appeals. The Court language here was Bengali; and though I had passed my examination in this in Calcutta, I found my powers of speaking and understanding it very limited when I first arrived.

As the planters were now much restricted in their powers to compel the cultivation of indigo, they had recourse to Act X. of 1859, and sued their tenants under its various sections for arrears of rent, enhancement of rent, and ejectment. In the old days, when indigo was in full swing, these suits were few in number, as, if rents were not paid, they were merely entered in the accounts, and went with the unrepaid indigo advances to keep the ryot in bondage to the factory. Now, of course, it became an object to get as much rent as possible from those ryots who refused to cultivate indigo. Act X. of 1859 recognized definitely the rights and interests in the soil of the peasant

farmer under certain conditions; and the ryots therefore were divided into three classes.

(1) Ryots who were merely tenants at will, *e.g.*, those who had newly settled down, and had no hereditary or prescriptive rights.

(2) Ryots having right of occupancy who had held the same land for twelve years and upwards, who could not be ejected except for non-payment of rent, and whose rents could not be enhanced except on certain grounds, *e.g.*, that the rates paid by them were lower than those paid for similar lands in the neighbourhood, or that the value of the produce or the productive powers of the land had increased without the agency of the ryot.

(3) Ryots who had held their land in perpetuity at the same rate of rent, and whose rent could not be increased on any ground. Twenty years proved was taken to be perpetuity unless the contrary were shown by the opposite party.

The most difficult suits to decide were those for enhancement of rent on the second ground, namely, that the value of the produce, etc., had increased without the agency of the ryot. About a year before this, a well-known planter in the Nuddea district had sued a ryot named Issur Ghose for enhancement of rent on these grounds, and the case had been appealed to the High Court on the legal point as to the basis on which the enhanced rent could be assessed.

The whole fifteen Judges sat upon the case, and each wrote a separate judgment. It was finally decided that the assessment should be based on the principle of proportion, viz., that the increased rent should bear the same pro-

portion to the increased value of the land or produce, as the former rents bore to the former value. The Court, however, was to take into consideration the increase in the prices of labour, bullocks, etc., and deduct these from the increased value of the produce. Now, all this was terribly difficult for a Court of Justice to decide satisfactorily; the onus, too, lay on the demander of enhanced rent, and it was very difficult to prove all that it was necessary for him to prove.

One District Judge actually had a field of one beegah cut and carried before his eyes; and the produce weighed and valued. He then himself calculated the cost of the labour and bullocks, etc., and the cultivator's living for the time necessary to produce the crop, and then settled the rent. But though this might hold good as a precedent for other fields of exactly the same quality, it was no use for land of any other sort; and indeed in any case the defendant could plead that his holding was not of the same kind of land, and thus make the suit long and complicated. I do not recollect that I ever arrived at a satisfactory decision in a case of this sort.

It was not so difficult, however, to come to a decision in cases where enhanced rent was sought on the first ground, viz., that higher rents were paid for similar land in the neighbourhood. For, by established custom, the same rates were held to prevail for lands of similar quality in the same "pergunnah." I don't quite know the original meaning of this word; but it now signifies a certain area, something like our "parish."

Just at this time the native landholders, following the

example of the planters, were suing their tenants in Kishnaghur and its immediate neighbourhood for rent at enhanced rates. Under Act X. of 1859, suits for house rent are not cognizable; but those for rent of the land on which houses stand are so. Shortly before my arrival, the Judge had decided that a fair rent for bastoo, or land used for house sites within Kishnaghur and certain suburban limits, was 10 rs., or £1 per beegah. This was a precedent which I was bound to follow.

There was a Roman Catholic mission at Kishnaghur, and it so happened that the proprietor of the site on which the Mission House stood, sued the representative of the Mission for enhanced rent, on the ground above stated. The representative appeared on the day appointed for the trial of the case. He was a monk, of which order I forget, but to my great surprise spoke no language but Italian. He had not been long at the Mission, but I was at a loss to understand of what use he could possibly be. He had a pleader who explained his case to be, that when the Mission had erected their dwelling-house, the then proprietor, on giving a lease, had verbally promised never to demand increased rent. The plaintiff denied this; the lease was not forthcoming; and there was no proof on the part of the defence. I knew a little Italian, and endeavoured to explain this to the defendant, who, however, either could not or would not understand, but who kept on calling the plaintiff "ladrone, bugiardo," etc., so I adjourned the case for a fortnight, telling the pleader that this would give his party an opportunity of bringing forward any proof they might be able to procure.

Two days afterwards I received an English letter from the defendant (which he had got somebody to write for him), couched in very insolent terms, demanding the return of all his documents (merely receipts for rent for former years), in order that he might take his case before a tribunal where he would have a chance of getting justice. This was irritating; but I determined not to be angry, and merely ordered the letter to be filed with the record, adding, "that when the defendant should present a petition on properly stamped paper of 8 annas (1*s.*), further orders would be passed." He did not appear on the date to which the case was adjourned, and I therefore gave an *ex parte* decree against him; and I heard nothing more of the matter.

Curiously enough, just after this, I had to try a case in which our Protestant clergyman was defendant. It was similar to the foregoing; but this man could produce his lease, which set forth that the land was let to him for the purpose of building a church, dwelling-house, and school, but said nothing about the rate of rent being permanent. He also declared that the grantor of the lease had verbally stated that the rent should never be increased. I thought it no doubt true that this statement had been made; but as there was no proof except the defendant's assertion on oath, and this condition was not set forth in the lease, I was afraid I should have to decide the case against him. He was a good old fellow, but very excitable, and abused the plaintiff in English in no measured terms, which fortunately he did not understand; calling him "scoundrel, liar, robber," etc. I had to call him to order, and pointed

out that in a Court of Justice there were two sides to every question, and that this man was probably only demanding that to which he believed himself justly entitled. He denied the possibility of this, but behaved more quietly, and his pleader asked for one day's delay, saying that he had important precedents to produce in favour of his side. This I allowed; and sure enough the next day he produced a decision of the High Court, ruling that "*in* cases where leases had been granted for the erection of buildings for other than agricultural purposes, the rent could not be enhanced under the provisions of Act X. of 1859." This exactly fitted this case, and I was uncommonly glad to be able to follow this precedent and to dismiss the suit. My order was appealed against to the Judge; but I ascertained that he upheld it, though on different grounds—what grounds, I don't know.

Had his Italian *confrère* been able to produce a lease and bring forward this precedent, I should have been able to decide in his favour also. But I was amused at the uncontrolled indignation exhibited by both these Christian clergymen.

Not long after, I had to deal with a much higher clerical dignitary, Archdeacon Prance, who had been on a visitation tour to a great part of India, and was now on his return journey to Calcutta. The Government had recently placed the control of the arrangements for palanquin dâks under the Joint Magistrates of each district; so that anybody requiring palanquin bearers and palanquins to go from Kishnaghur anywhere would have to apply to me, as Joint Magistrate of the Nuddea district. Accordingly I

received a letter from the Archdeacon, stating that he would require bearers to take him from Kishnaghur to the neighbouring district of Jessore, about fifty-five miles, on the night of the 10th of October, and two "banghidars" or porters for his luggage. He wished to start at 6 p.m., from the house of the Rev. Mr. Mohl.

The head clerk in my office had been appointed to the direct supervision of these arrangements, and received a small percentage on the pay of the bearers as remuneration. I ordered him to get twenty bearers and two porters, and to have them at Mohl's house at the hour appointed. About 6.30, just as I had come home from the Racket Court, I received a message from Mohl, whose house was only 200 yards from mine, to the effect that the bearers had all run away. It seems that they had all assembled, and first tried the weight of the palanquin, which was the Archdeacon's own, and probably rather more heavy than those ordinarily hired. They had then been rather frightened at the size of his "petaras," a kind of pyramidal box which travellers generally have made in pairs for palanquin journeys, and which are carried slung at the ends of a bamboo resting on the shoulders of the porter, much as a milkman carries his milk-cans at home; and when the Archdeacon himself had appeared,—a very tall man, though not really heavy,—they were panic-stricken, and fled helter-skelter.

I sent for my clerk, and told him to get fresh bearers; and sent a note to the Archdeacon, expressing my regret at the occurrence, and saying I hoped he would be able to start between 8 and 9. About 8.30, my clerk came to me

and told me that the Archdeacon had actually started. I looked out and saw the procession of bearers with the flaming torch on the road, and felt eased in mind on the subject. At 10 p.m., just as I was thinking of bed, one of Mohl's servants came running in and told me the Archdeacon had returned on foot.

I had determined to go over to his house to see him in person, when I received a note hurriedly written, stating that the bearers had conveyed him to a plain outside the town, set the palki down, extinguished the torch, and then run away. That he had found his way back on foot with difficulty; that he was much annoyed; that he had travelled through all sorts of out-of-the-way places, and never been so treated before; and that he should report the matter to the Lieutenant-Governor.

Here was another clerical Christian in a state of indignation. His letter was unreasonable; and he should have known that the very fact of Nuddea being so near the centre of civilization, made it more difficult for us in authority to coerce labour in any but a legal manner. However, I went over to Mohl's house, and was ushered into the dining-room, where, seated round the table, I found him with several other clergymen, missionaries, etc., who had come into Kishnaghur specially to meet him. They evidently all looked upon me as a great sinner, and seemed as if they could groan over my delinquencies. However, the moment the Archdeacon heard who I was, he came forward to greet me, saying, "I have just sent you a note; but I hope it has not reached you, and that when it does, you will not read it."

"I have read it," I said, "and I think it very natural that you should be irritated at what has happened; but you must know enough of the native character to understand that I am not to blame for this."

"Quite so," he said. And we parted very good friends, I promising to get him another set of bearers the next afternoon. The next day he really did start; but four or five days afterwards I got a note from him from Calcutta, saying that even this set had run away some ten miles before reaching Jessore. This had occurred outside my jurisdiction, and he had procured more men to carry him the remaining distance without any difficulty. He wrote most good humouredly, and showed a most gentlemanlike spirit in the matter, not even asking for the punishment of the men who had caused him so much inconvenience.

However, I determined not to let them off, and got hold of them by driblets, and punished them with what would be to them heavy fines, under that section of the all-embracing Penal Code specially enacted to meet such cases.

The next day my clerk resigned his post of supervisor of palki dâks, preferring peace and quiet to the emoluments he might draw therefrom with a chance of further bother like that he had just gone through. Shortly after, the control of these arrangements was made over to the Police, who certainly were able to keep a tighter hand over the labouring classes than other Government departments.

My criminal work, as I have stated above, occupied a good deal of my time, as in every case not of a trivial nature long-winded pleaders were employed on both sides

and wasted valuable hours. These Bengalis all seemed to have the gift of fluency; and though it was possible to induce those for the prosecution in really good cases to cut short their addresses, it was not so with the pleaders for the defence.

In one case I had a young Brahmin of good family and of English education,—that is, he had been educated in the College at Kishnaghur,—brought before me, charged with stealing a large sum of money from his uncle, who had adopted him as his heir, after the Hindu fashion. He had gone to Calcutta with his booty, and had expended some of it with a shopkeeper in the China bazaar there. A sharp policeman had followed him to Calcutta, traced him to this shop, and found in the possession of the shopkeeper a 200 r. (£20) note, the number of which was known to the prosecutor, and which the shopkeeper stated he had received from the accused. He then arrested the accused in Calcutta, and he was tried by me, in whose jurisdiction the theft had been committed.

It was necessary to have up the China bazaar shopkeeper and his books, as part of the case for the prosecution. Oh, those books! I shall never forget them; and anything more difficult to understand it is impossible to conceive. It was a terrible nuisance for the poor man himself; for after I had decided the case an appeal was preferred, and the books could not be restored to him until the appeal was decided also, to say nothing of his having to come sixty miles by rail and twelve by road from Calcutta.

The accused was defended by three pleaders, all long-

winded, and one of them with a reputation analogous to that of an Old Bailey practitioner. As he was commencing to address me, I said to him, "Recollect that I am not a jury. Be as short as you can, and only say what is to the point." "Very well, my lord," he said; "but I must speak a little long, or my client won't believe that I am doing the best I can for him."

The details of the case were somewhat complicated, and this wretched pleader took up my time for two whole days with his arguments. They were really worthless; but I could not stop him, as he would have unhesitatingly stated in his appeal to the Judge that I had refused to hear his arguments, and so not given the accused a fair trial. He tried to make out that the whole case was a conspiracy, and that the shopkeeper was in league with the prosecutor. Doubtless the shopkeeper, like his *confrères* in the China bazaar, had induced the accused to buy a great many things that he did not really want. The pleader had not had an English education, and so did not understand the nature of the various articles of English clothing purchased at the shop. Among other items was one of twelve pairs of socks.

"Consider," said the pleader, "the story is on the face of it absurd, and the account made out by the shopkeeper is unworthy of credit. He asserts that this young gentleman bought twelve pairs of socks all at once. Now, had he said three or even four pairs, the story might have been believed; but twelve! No, it is impossible." Notwithstanding his eloquence, I convicted the accused; and as his defence had consisted chiefly in vilification of his kind old

adoptive uncle, I saw no extenuating circumstances in the case, and sentenced him to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

On another occasion he had stolen a valuable silver cup from this same uncle, and given it to a woman of ill fame in the town. This was made the subject of a separate case; and I convicted him on this charge also, and sentenced him to be flogged, as he seemed a very bad lot. However, before the ink on my order was dry, notice of appeal was put in, and a petition that I would defer execution of the sentence of flogging until the result of the appeal was known. The Judge upheld my orders in both cases; and as the accused was in gaol, the flogging had to be carried out there.

Here again caste gave me trouble; for, the convict being a Brahmin, the man whose duty it was to inflict flogging in the gaol refused to flog in this case (he being a low-caste Hindu, and a prisoner too). I threatened to flog him for his refusal, and he pretended to have hurt the thumb of his right hand. However I said, "Thumb or no thumb, he must execute the flogging." And finally I had to make another man stand over him with an uplifted cane while he flogged the convict. After all, the blows fell lightly, under the excuse of the bad thumb; but the punishment of the shame and degradation was sufficient. The poor youth hung down his head when tied to the triangles, and showed such abject dejection that I felt quite sorry for him; and I believe his mental agony was far greater than any physical pain that could have been inflicted. But he was an ungrateful scoundrel, and deserved it.

With reference to these sentences of flogging, I may mention as an instance of the manner in which in Bengal we were expected "to make bricks without straw," that when the Act reintroducing flogging was passed, in 1864, no provision was made for the appointment of executioners, and the Government always steadily refused to make any allowance for the payment of any such officials, so that we had to use our own chuprassies for the purpose. At first they all refused to act, saying they would lose caste; but as we threatened to dismiss them if they did not, they all gave in.

The floggings were carried out outside the Court, at the end of the day's work and in the presence of some magistrate; and it very often happened that all the chuprassies would be absent on some message or other, so that search had to be made for an executioner. Generally some constable of the Court police guard was caught and would shyly and reluctantly perform the office. The result was, that the floggings were not nearly as effective as they ought to be; but at any rate there was an annual saving of many rupees to the Government, the only expense being the cost of the canes, which were entered in the Court contingent bill.

In Nuddea, of course, as a highly advanced district, the jury system had been introduced. The rules are not the same as in England. The number may be five, seven, or nine; and a majority of four, five, or six is sufficient for a conviction or an acquittal. If they cannot agree to this extent, there is a fresh trial.

There is a story that on the occasion of the first trial

by jury in the Patna district, the Judge, who was somewhat proud of his fluency in the vernacular, made a long and elaborate charge to the jury of seven members, pointing out that the decision rested with them, and that it was only his business to explain the law, ending up with the usual form, "And now, gentlemen of the jury, what is your verdict?" The seven jurymen all stood up, put their hands palm to palm, the attitude of respect assumed by natives in the presence of a superior, and replied with one voice, "Jaise huzoor ke rai," which, being translated, means, "Whatever your highness thinks right." Somewhat discouraging.

This sort of thing, however, did not last long, and juries very frequently took the bit between their teeth, and gave verdicts by no means in accordance with the evidence or summing up of the learned Judges. Just as I came to Kishnaghur there was a curious instance of this.

The gomastah of a certain indigo factory had gone into a village which was not on very good terms with the said factory, with one or two attendants, on certain business. When they were leaving the village some disagreement arose, and a body of the villagers set upon the gomastah and his party, gave them a beating with clubs, and finally cut off the gomastah's nose. The Joint Magistrate, my predecessor, had committed them for trial by the Sessions Court. The evidence was good, the identification of the accused complete, and the Judge summed up strongly for a conviction.

The jury unanimously acquitted all the prisoners.

The Judge expressed his dissent from the verdict in

rather marked language. The foreman of the jury (seven in number) then addressed the Judge, and said that if allowed a private interview he could give a reason for their verdict. Tomlinson was naturally curious to know this reason, and allowed the interview. The foreman then told him that the jury were all fully convinced of the guilt of the accused, but that the previous evening (the trial lasted two days) the brother of the wounded gomastah had come to him and offered the jurymen 50 rs. apiece if they would find a verdict of guilty. They thought their honour had been insulted, and so they acquitted all the prisoners. Rather queer logic.

But the harm was done, the acquittal was according to law, and the prisoners could not be tried over again.

However, Tomlinson thought it right to put the would-be briber on his trial, "for,"—as the Penal Code expresses it,—"the abetment of the receipt by a public servant of a gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act;" a juror being a public servant for the time being. He was convicted, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Native opinion was much outraged at this. It amounted to this. "The poor man only wanted to give the jury a present for deciding justly. They happened to be men in tolerably good circumstances, and so were not tempted by the 50 rs., but the gomastah could not afford to offer more; and they pretended to be honest, and so decided unjustly. The result is, that all the criminals go scot-free, and the family of the injured man is disgraced by the imprisonment of his brother." It was impossible to argue as to the

result; as to the attempt at bribery, native opinion was, and I fear always will be, most lenient.

My own experience of juries in Bengal is, that they would willingly convict in cases of housebreaking with violence and dacoities, but that it was very difficult to get a verdict from them in cases of forgery or perjury.

On the point of bribery, even an Englishman's horror seems to get toned down after a long residence in India. But at this time my feelings were still very keen against it, as I knew that it was probably occurring daily among my subordinates, though I could not detect it.

One day, however, just at the end of Cutcherry, as I was preparing to leave the Court, one of the more respectable mookhtyars rushed in, crying, "Justice, O incarnation of justice (dharmavatar)! The rent-roll clerk won't let me look at my employer's revenue account unless I give him money."

I should explain, that any landholder is entitled on demand to inspect, personally or by authorized agent, the account of the revenue payable by him to Government, and the clerk in charge of this account is bound to show it him.

I immediately sent for the clerk, put him on his trial, took the deposition of the complainant, and those of his witnesses, two other mookhtyars, who were standing by. The clerk had had no time to prepare a false story, and made a confused defence, saying that it was only on account of a quarrel between him and the mookhtyar.

The evidence was clear against him, but he wished to call a couple of witnesses also employed in his department.

It was now late, and they had gone home, so I adjourned the case till the next day. There was only one candle available too, and the bats, generally the sole occupants of the Court-house after dark, unaccustomed to this intrusion on a time sacred to them, were flying round it in a most disagreeable way, and did actually put it out once.

The next morning, on calling on the case, the complainant mookhtyar addressed me, saying, he regretted very much that he had brought the charge, and he hoped that I would not proceed with it.

I said, "Do you wish to admit that the charge was false?"

"Oh no," he said; "but I acted on the impulse of the moment, and I do not wish to get the clerk into trouble."

"The case must go on," I said, "and if proved, you will have done a public service by bringing it to my notice."

As I imagined, the two witnesses had nothing plausible to say in defence of the accused, so I convicted him, sentenced him to one month's imprisonment with hard labour, and sent the record of the case to MacDonald, recommending that he should be dismissed. He was one of his clerks, and MacDonald alone could dismiss him. In doing this I thought I had been very lenient. When I met MacDonald, at the Racket Court in the evening, he said, "I am very sorry you have recommended that clerk to be dismissed. He is a good servant, and is not a bit worse than his neighbours. I shall look into the matter, and let him off if I can."

I was startled at this, and said that when we were fortunate enough to catch a man demanding bribes, as in this case,

we ought to make a severe example of him, and impress upon the natives what a serious view we took of it. The next day he said to me, "I'm afraid the man must go; but for all that I don't think you will have deterred the giving or taking bribes in one single instance in the future, and this man has been punished simply because the mookhtyar lost his temper and rushed in to you."

I found afterwards that the natives thought the man had been very badly treated, and looked upon the complainant mookhtyar with, to say the least of it, "reserved respect." I was also informed that his employer had pitched into him well for his action in the matter, and even threatened to dismiss him; but he had pacified him by saying that he had been carried away by zeal for his interests. I however told him in open Court that I highly approved his conduct, and that if all practitioners behaved equally independently that public business would be carried on much more satisfactorily for all parties. I believe, however, that in reality he very much repented what he had done.

I had another case at Kishnaghur, in which one of my own clerks was concerned. For some little time burglaries had been very frequent in the town; and as the perpetrators remained undiscovered, I had been writing very severe things about the police. Gilham, the District Superintendent, was at length goaded into extra activity; and one morning a man was brought handcuffed to my private house with a request that I would listen to certain confessions he had to make, and that I would not make them public until the police had had time to act upon the information to be obtained from him.

This procedure was necessary, because, according to the Indian criminal law, a confession made to a police officer is not receivable as evidence, unless the police officer discovers something as a direct consequence of that confession; *e.g.*, if A, a prisoner, confesses to B, a police officer, that he has stolen certain property, and concealed it in a certain place, and B in consequence searches that place and finds the property, that confession may be received as evidence against A. But any confession made in the presence of a magistrate is admissible.

With reference to the police the Legislature considered it necessary to be very strict on this point, in order to prevent extorted confessions as far as possible; and Sec. 147 of the Criminal Procedure Code enacts that "no police officer shall record any statement, or any admission or confession of guilt, which may be made before him by a person accused of any offence." It is provided, however, that he may reduce the same to writing informally for his own guidance. These provisions make the police very anxious to hurry a confessing prisoner before a magistrate, in order to get his statements recorded as available evidence as soon as possible.

The prisoner in this case was a long thin creature who looked as if he could glide like a snake through a hole in a mud wall, as no doubt he had in very numerous instances. He began his confession after I had duly warned him that he was not obliged to say anything, and that anything he did say could be used as evidence against him. He actually confessed to seventeen different burglaries, and I was uncommonly glad when he had finished. After he got

to about the tenth I asked him if there were any more, and he said after reflection, "aur ek-tee acche dharma-vatar" (there is *one* more, O incarnation of justice). As this remark was made seven times, I began to fear he would never stop.

The important point was, that the chief "tangidar," or receiver of the stolen property, was a clerk in my own office on the criminal side, and who probably had read out to me many of the police reports relating to these undetected burglaries. I issued orders for his arrest at once, and ordered his house to be searched; and a great number of the articles mentioned in the prisoner's confession were found there. They consisted chiefly of lotas, brass plates, and cooking utensils. I had them exhibited at the principal police station in the town, and a proclamation issued inviting people to go and make their claims. On any claimant appearing, the police register of complaints was searched, to ascertain if he had laid information before the police at the time of the commission of the burglary. If he had, this of course was good corroborative evidence of his claim, and materially supported his identification of the brass plates, or whatever it might be. All these things looked to me very much alike; but the natives who use them can infallibly identify their own, just as we can identify our own black hats amidst a crowd of others.

Finally, I got very complete evidence in six cases, and committed the clerk for trial before the Sessions Court. I could have punished him myself; but I did not think the term of imprisonment that I could impose sufficient, and considered it advisable even to run all the risk of

an acquittal by a jury. At the same time, I thought that the jury would not be lenient in this case, although the clerk was a man of very respectable caste, as the matter very intimately concerned the safety of their own property. My opinion was correct. They found him guilty unanimously; and he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. For some time after this the town of Kishnaghur was comparatively free from burglaries.

I had been at Kishnaghur about ten months when the great famine of 1866 came upon us. We escaped far better than the districts in the South-West, and it was in Orissa that the suffering was most severe.

In January we began to hear reports that the price of rice was getting very high, and I took upon myself to buy a cargo of rice, and store it for the use of my servants, letting them have it at cost price. This was a great boon to them, as all Indian servants feed themselves; and when the famine was at its height they got rice from my store at a third of the price they would have had to pay in the bazaar. They were loud in verbal gratitude; but their actions did not coincide with their words, for I was a very considerable loser by the transaction,—to the amount, I think, of half the purchase-money,—so that a good quantity of the store must have been stolen, and probably sold at famine prices to poor neighbours.

At first we were inclined to think that the rumours of scarcity were exaggerated; for with every extra downpour of rain, and every extra week of dry weather between September and November, reports are spread of

inundations or drought; but one day MacDonald observed a woman by the road side picking some unwholesome berries and eating them, and on asking why, she said she had nothing to eat, and her neighbours were too poor to give her anything in charity. This sounded serious, as charity to beggars is universal and unfailing in Bengal.

In my Court house I had no retiring-room, so I used to have my lunch sent to the station billiard-room, some twenty yards distant. It consisted of only one large room, and as it was still tolerably cool, all the doors and windows were open. One day I saw an emaciated boy looking wistfully at me while I was eating; and I offered him some fragments of food, thinking he would of course reject them, on the score of caste. To my surprise, he devoured them greedily; and then I knew he must be hungry indeed. This was the day after MacDonald's observation; and when I told him of this he at once thought it right to hold a meeting and consider what special steps it might be necessary to take.

We held it that day week, in our municipal office, having sent invitations to all parts of the district to influential landholders to come in person or send information by letter of the state of their neighbourhood, and their probable requirements. Orders were sent to all the subdivisional Magistrates to send reports to be laid before the meeting The information received disclosed wide-spread distress in the district, with a probability of its becoming much more severe if timely assistance were not given; and we came to the decision that relief

works ought to be started for the assistance of the able-bodied poor, and subscriptions raised for the relief of those who were unable to work.

And now my troubles began, for a Famine Relief Committee was instituted; and I, being already harder worked than any man in the district, except MacDonald and Tomlinson, was appointed its Secretary. The first thing I had to do was to draw up a report of the proceedings, and also on the state of the district, to be sent to the Commissioner, and by him transmitted to Government. I recollect, by working hard and writing fast, I had got this done by 4 p.m.; and then I went to Cutcherry with all my day's ordinary work before me.

MacDonald took upon himself the organization of relief works throughout the district, and the task,—not a very easy one,—of obtaining grants of money from the Government for the purpose. In addition to all committees, correspondence, and frequent reports to Government,—all of which reappeared in the public press, and had, therefore, to be drawn up with great care and judgment,—I had to look after the institution of relief depôts in various parts of the district, and to exercise control over them when instituted.

Every rupee was of importance. Our charitable subscriptions amounted to about £1,100, which does not sound much to English ears, but was creditable for a poor district. MacDonald asked Government for 100,000 rs., and got in driblets at length about 50,000 = £5,000. A goodly portion of this was merely an advance from the amount likely to be allotted to our district from

the Amalgamated Road Fund of Bengal, to enable relief works to be commenced. And a portion of it we were ordered to pay over to a well-meaning planter who had instituted a relief depôt near his factory. He had paid a visit to the Lieutenant-Governor in Calcutta, and had obtained an order from him to get what he might require from us, out of the Government grants.

Near him a missionary, also well meaning, had established a relief depôt, where a small amount of rice and one pice in money,—a little over a farthing,—were given to each person. These depôts were only two miles apart, and we ascertained that persons used to go from one to the other, and so get double supplies; and further, that this same relief was given to professional women of ill-fame who still wore their silver armlets and anklets.

In fact there was no proper supervision; and it made us very indignant to think that precious money, so hard to obtain, was being wasted. We therefore forwarded a remonstrance to Government, and received permission to stop further supplies to the planter; but we were still much aggrieved that the Lieutenant-Governor should have done this without consulting us first.

All our relief works were soon crowded, and we had to turn off some applicants for work to the relief depôts, as the crowd only got in each others' way. But the depôts soon became over full also, and it was necessary to constantly institute new ones. They were a source of incessant anxiety to me, as I was inundated with applications from individuals who wished to become presidents of those depôts, and who offered certain

assistance, either in money or rice, if additional grants in aid were given by me. It was very necessary to make inquiries, but without any delay, as to their character and situation. It was a serious matter to refuse, and with our limited resources it was a serious matter to grant these requests.

All this coming on the top of my ordinary work was rather too much for me. I began to get sleepless nights, and when I did sleep, I was constantly dreaming of relief depôts, and how to get money to keep them supplied. Committees as a rule are not much use except for talking purposes, and I have thought them a considerable nuisance all through my service, where real work was to be done. But I am bound to say that two or three native members of our Committee worked well and judiciously, and were of very great assistance.

There were certain ladies of family in the towns of Kishnaghur and Nuddea who, though of high rank, were poor, and whose resources did not enable them to meet the rise of price in the necessaries of life. They could not come to work on the roads, and they could not come to the relief depôts. For to them death was preferable to appearance in public. They would have died quietly of starvation, had it not been for some of the Hindu members of our Committee.

It was of course very difficult for us to break through our principles, and give relief to people who would not come to the depôts and could not work. But the Hindus suggested the idea of supplying them with materials for needlework, which they were capable of doing well

and artistically. We jumped at the idea, advanced a small sum for this, and for the purchase of food to keep our needlewomen alive; and had the satisfaction, not only of saving their lives and their reputation, but of actually in the end realizing a profit by the sale of their handiwork.

The Bengal Government and the Board of Revenue were no doubt apathetic about this famine, and they were afterwards censured by the Secretary of State. In Orissa the state of things was terrible; and in Balasore, one of the towns of that province, there were 245 dead bodies found by the police in one day. In Nuddea we were much better off, and the deaths ascertained to have occurred from starvation were few throughout the district; but no doubt a great deal of misery was staved off by the measures we had taken and the vigorous demands of MacDonald for Government aid. At length the Commissioner of the division was sent down to inspect and report on the state of things. MacDonald seemed to think that his object was to pooh-pooh the whole matter. But I knew him to be a high-minded and impartial official, and was confident of the result of his visit. He went round all the town and suburban depôts, unaccompanied by me, for I wished him to see that I had no desire to gloss over anything by personal explanations. It so happened that at one place a female applicant for food had brought her child in her arms, and the poor little thing died there in the Commissioner's presence. This perhaps tended to heighten his belief in our real necessities. He went away thoroughly

satisfied, and thenceforward we found our demands for assistance less grudgingly met.

I calculated that we were feeding about 80,000 people weekly. Government certainly learned a lesson from this, and in the recent famine in Behar they were carried to the other extreme, and no doubt there has been unnecessarily lavish expenditure and great waste of money.

In consequence of the scarcity, there was, as might have been expected, a considerable increase of crime, in the form of thefts, burglaries, and what were called "grain dacoities." I recollect the first case of grain theft brought before me, in which the wretched emaciated prisoner pleaded hunger in extenuation of his crime. I had not the heart to sentence him to flogging, and gave him one month's imprisonment. When brought before me for discharge at the expiration of his sentence, I could scarcely believe it was the same man; he was sleek and fat. It was evident that this sort of thing would have a tendency "encourager les autres," not in the sense originally intended; and so for the future I was obliged to harden my heart, and not send those petty thieves to gaol. But I always directed the flogging to be light, and then sent the accused straight off to one of the relief works.

The grain dacoities were more serious matters, and gave me a great deal of anxiety and trouble. Of course when there was plunder with violence, it was necessary to commit the accused to the Sessions Court for trial; but there were several cases of a peculiar nature.

In most villages there existed a "mahajun," or merchant, who was also a money-lender. These men used to deal in agricultural produce, and made advances in money and grain for seed to the cultivators, recouping themselves when the crops were reaped. They also used frequently to make advances in kind, of rice and other necessaries of life, in order that the cultivators might live until their crops came to maturity.

In a village called Chapra lived one of these merchants, Bonomali Ghose by name. He had large rice golahs in the village, and had made heavy advances to the villagers during this time of scarcity; but at length, becoming alarmed, he had declined to give any more credit. The villagers, who were really in want of food, and maddened by the sight of these golahs stored with grain, could not resist the temptation to help themselves.

I should explain that a "golah" is a building consisting of a circular mud wall placed on a base of masonry or wood, this again being supported on posts or stone pillars about three feet in height, thus allowing a free circulation of air between the floor of the store and the ground. The grain is poured in from above, being carried up by means of a ladder placed against the side of the circular wall. The roof is a circular piece of thatch work, conical in the centre, and movable. When it is desired to take any grain out of the store, one side of the roof is forced up and kept open by a bamboo prop, and a man ascends by the ladder; and if the store is so empty as to render it necessary, gets inside to bring out the contents.

The complaint of Bonomali Ghose was, that on a certain day in June a number of the villagers armed with clubs had come to him and demanded rice. He had refused, and they had proceeded to help themselves in the regular way, putting up a ladder and opening the roof. Some forty defendants were accused by name, and the matter assumed the aspect of a very big case. In answer to my questions, he said that no violence had been used to him or his servants; but a line of men had prevented him from approaching his golah. I ascertained that all the men were respectable and *bonâ fide* cultivators of land.

One of them here broke in, saying, "O incarnation of justice, we were hungry, and so were our wives and children; we will pay back what we took when our crops are ripe; and we have kept an account of what each man took." Bonomali Ghose admitted this to be true, and said that if they would promise not to do it again he did not wish to prosecute further. The case technically was dacoity, for there were more than five persons armed (with clubs) who had taken property that was not theirs. But it would have been a very long business, going into the whole case and establishing against each accused his presence at the spot and the part he had taken in the affair. Further, I was anxious not to crowd my gaol with respectable people.

So I said to all the accused, "This case is properly dacoity, and I ought, according to law, to commit you all to the Sessions Court for trial, where you would get long periods of imprisonment. If, however, you will throw yourself on my mercy and all of you confess your guilt

and promise not to do it again, I will treat the case differently." After some little demur, they all agreed to confess; and when their confessions were duly recorded, so that the papers of the case were all *en règle*, I convicted them all of simple trespass in a building, and fined them 1 rupee, or 2*s*., each. The prosecutor, Bonomali, paid this, and promised me he would keep them going until the next harvest, when, no doubt, he more than recouped himself.

I was very anxious about the result, for I had not acted according to law; and if this should be talked of throughout the district, and men thereby encouraged to plunder golahs, my responsibility would be very great. If, too, the Judge, or the High Court, had become cognizant of these proceedings, I should at least have been severely censured, as it is their business only to see that the law is carried out, regardless of consequences. They had the power of calling for any record from my Court for inspection. I did not even tell MacDonald, for fear he should not like to take the responsibility of non-interference. But no further disturbance occurred in this village, and I treated two other similar cases in the same way, and with equal success. In July there was ample rain, all fears of another year's famine passed away, and the price of rice got easier as the natural laws of supply and demand began to have effect, and grain came in from other more fortunate districts.

Had I committed these men to the Sessions for trial, they and their families would have been ruined, and the prosecutor would have suffered considerable loss. But I found that in the district of Midnapore, where, no doubt,

the famine was much more severe, another view had been taken, and men concerned in similar cases had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. However, I heard afterwards that in many cases, when the famine had passed over, these sentences had been remitted by the Government of Bengal.

In August things had become quite quiet; but I was very much worn out, and began to long for home. The Civil Surgeon told me I wanted a change, and so I determined to apply for leave on medical certificate. Eardley wrote out a very elaborate account of my case, armed with which I appeared before the Medical Board in Calcutta, who without demur recommended the Government to grant me leave of absence to Europe for fifteen months. This was speedily done; and all I had to do now, was to make over charge to my successor, once more sell my household effects, pack up my traps, and start.

Making over charge was a much simpler affair here than at Durbhungah, for I had no stamps to count or Treasury to hand over, etc., and my successor took from me the Ice Club. He was a mathematician of note, and after my departure found a defalcation of 50 rs., £5, in the accounts. Notice was sent to me in England, and I sent out the money; and this was the result of the trouble and bother I had had with the thing.

My work at Kishnaghur had tied me very much to my desk. I only had two afternoons' sniping the whole sixteen months that I was there; and, with the exception of saying good-bye to Tomlinson and MacDonald, I was not sorry to leave it. Besides, there was the looking forward to seeing

home; and on the 20th of August I left in the highest spirits.

I may mention that, among other things, I had had the encouragement of arboriculture in the district handed over to me. The Government of Bengal had taken up the subject in a somewhat apathetic way; and seeds of various trees had been sent to the Magistrates of every district with a view to planting young trees along the existing roads. I had taken some interest in the matter, started a nursery-garden of trees, and from this had supplied for the various roads some two thousand plants. As I drove to the Buggoolah station I saw a very promising avenue of these. On my return to India, some sixteen months afterwards, I paid a flying visit to Kishnaghur, and found that not one single tree out of the two thousand was in existence. My successor had taken no interest in the matter, and arboriculture in Nuddea had died a very natural death.

On the 23rd of August I left the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company's wharf at Garden Reach; and after a most delightful voyage, without one drop of rain the whole way, reached Marseilles on the 27th of September. As I had come round the Cape of Good Hope, all the places on this route were new to me; and my landings at Madras and Galle and Aden, the trip through Egypt, the sight of Malta, the Straits of Bonifacio, and Marseilles, were all pleasures.

CHAPTER III.

AT DACCA.

RETURN TO INDIA.—APPOINTED TO HOOGHLY.—PROMOTED TO ACT AS MAGISTRATE AND COLLECTOR OF DACCA.—JOURNEY THERE.—DACCA IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH MORAL INFLUENCE.—CUTCHERRIES.—TAKE OVER CHARGE.—THE GAOL.—NO GATE—AREA AND DIVISIONS OF DISTRICT.—POLICE.—A RIOT CASE.—OUR HOUSE.—HINDU ECONOMY. — RESULT. — POLO. — MUNNIPOOREES. — THE LOCAL PAPER. —A WILL CASE.—AN OMINOUS STORM.—A CYCLONE. — SHIAHS AND SUNNIS.

I REACHED Folkestone on the last day of September. Only one who has been exiled in an out-of-the-way part of the world can properly appreciate the delights of a return to home and civilization. There is a sense of potential enjoyment in taking up a newspaper and reading through the entertainments to which it is possible to go. It is also no small thing to be able to walk about all day; and, I shall never forget the sensation of picking an apple myself for the first time after my return, and afterwards stealing a little cream from the dairy, when down at my father's place in Sussex.

I believe I enjoyed every hour of my furlough, during which I managed to meet my fate; and on the second week in November, 1867, as I had obtained one month's extension of leave, started with my wife and a very small baby *viâ* Southampton for Calcutta.

The voyage out was not in its details so pleasant as the voyage home. In the first place, the gorgeous East had lost its novelty for me, and the wrench in leaving home a second time was severe. My wife had many relatives in India, and was looking forward to seeing them, so that her case was at any rate no worse than mine. Under the then existing rules, my furlough allowance was £500 a year; but my expenditure had been at a considerably higher rate than that, and a return to full pay was necessary on economical grounds.

We were both very glad to feel ourselves alongside the wharf at Garden Reach, which we reached on the 28th of December, and after an hour of some confusion, shouting, and dust, found ourselves comfortably lodged in the house of one of my wife's relatives, an engineer officer holding a staff appointment in Calcutta. Calcutta gaiety was at its height; and we just had time to unpack enough of our boxes the next day to enable us to appear at a ball at Belvedere, the official residence of the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal.

There I saw, among many other friends, the former Commissioner of the Nuddea division, now become Secretary to the Government of Bengal, who informed me that I was to officiate as Joint Magistrate of the Hooghly district; but that in all probability I should soon be appointed to officiate as Magistrate and Collector of a district.

This was good news for me in every way, as Hooghly is only twenty-four miles from Calcutta by rail, and the present Collector was a friend of mine; and a day or two afterwards wrote to me offering me the use of his house

as long as he should be out in tents in the interior of the district. This was a most convenient offer, as, with my present encumbrances, I should not be able to dispose of myself so easily as heretofore.

Before the end of the first week in January we found ourselves comfortably installed in Caldwell's house, a fine large building overlooking the river Hooghly. I do not propose to say much about Hooghly, for I was there only two months, and my duties were similar to those at Nuddea, only the work was infinitely lighter. Indeed there was scarcely enough to do, and my pay of 900 rs. a month, or £1,080 a year, was ample remuneration for the work.

During my absence, I had been promoted to be a Joint Magistrate of the Second Grade; but was officiating in the First Grade—hence the increase in my emoluments. It was now just seven years since I first landed in India, and sixteen months of that period I had passed on leave, so that on the whole I had no reason to grumble.

In the first week in March, came to me the welcome letter announcing that I was appointed to officiate as Magistrate and Collector of Dacca. This would raise my pay to 1,033 rs. a month, or £1,239 a year. I showed the letter with some exultation to Caldwell, who had just returned from the interior; and he shook his head, saying, "Dacca is an out-of-the-way place, and not healthy, and if I were you, I should ask to be allowed to stay here until some healthier station turn up."

"It is a good sporting district, I believe?"

"Yes," he said; "but, after all, that only means a very

few days of enjoyment in the year, and there is nothing else to be said in its favour."

However, I was keen to go. I was most anxious to be a Magistrate and Collector, and I hurried on my preparations for departure. In a very few days I had said "good-bye" to Hooghly, and was again in Calcutta purchasing the necessary things for a settlement in Dacca. Once more the China Bazaar was in requisition; but on this occasion I also indulged in certain purchases from one of the European upholsterers in Calcutta, and went to the extravagance of a barouche and pair, besides a buggy for myself.

Our route lay over 110 miles of the Eastern Bengal Railway to Goalundo. Goalundo was a new port on the Pudda river, or big Ganges, that here sweeps round to the eastward, leaving a network of minor branches, including the Hooghly, to filter down by more westerly channels to the sea.

The original terminus of the E.B.R. on the Ganges had been at Kooshtea, some miles above Goalundo, and fine stations for goods and passengers had been erected; but, as in the case of Rajmahal, soon after all this had been built, the river receded some three miles, and a fresh port at Goalundo had to be created. I may here remark that there is now, some ten years later, a probability that Goalundo will be washed away, and the river return to its former bank at Kooshtea.

We left Calcutta at night on the 12th of March, and rumbled along, at the rate of about ten or twelve miles an hour, in a passenger carriage attached to a goods train,

reaching the bank of the mighty river about half an hour before sunrise. Here we found the steamer in readiness, with two flats lashed one on each side of her, which she was to tow down to Naraingunge, the port of Dacca.

These flats may be described as long two-decked barges, the upper deck being surmounted by a roof, which serves as a permanent awning. To each there is a commander and a mate. The former was generally a married man, and lived with his wife in a cabin on the upper deck. The constant journeys up and down the breezy river were supposed to make the life a healthy one; and, as a rule, these river captains looked fresh and ruddy, sometimes a little too ruddy. The captain of the steamer was also married, a jovial, genial, stout man, who had at one time commanded something bigger.

The vessels were the property of the E.B.R., and the accommodation for passengers was of the most meagre description. My party had a cabin on the upper deck, with a "charpoy" in it, that is, a square wood frame on four legs, with strips of canvas stretched across to support our bedding. There was no sort of washing utensil, and the whole of us did all that was necessary in the way of ablution in a tin bucket, which was horribly greasy when I first got hold of it; but which I managed to make a little cleaner by towing it alongside.

I spoke to the captain about this wretched state of things, and he told me it was owing to economy on the part of the railway company; that he had made frequent representations on the subject; and he hoped that there would be a speedy remedy, as the passenger traffic ap-

peared likely to be sufficiently lucrative to give a return for a little expenditure in making people more comfortable. I may add, that when I made my next journey, the cabins were comfortably fitted up, though we still had to find our own bedding. In India, however, it is the habit, not exactly to take up your bed and walk, but to make the servants do it, so that we could not justly complain on this score.

We got under weigh about 8 a.m.; and, as the current was with us, sped along at a very fair rate, notwithstanding our heavy encumbrances. It being the middle of March, the water was low, and we had to exercise great care in avoiding shallows. At various stages we took native pilots on board, who were waiting for us in boats all ready, so as to avoid delay. It appears that changes in the channel occur weekly in many places, and these men had to be constantly sounding and finding out these, between their spells of duty on board. The steamer drew less than four feet of water, the flats not so much as the steamer, which may give some idea of the difficulties of navigation. It seems a pity that such a mighty mass of water should be distributed in such an inconvenient way.

All day long we steamed down with the current, until, about sunset, we found a snug anchorage at a bend in the river, not far from where it debouches into the Megna, which is a continuation of the Brahmapootra river, coming down from Assam. It is not possible to go on during the night. The Dacca district now lay on both sides of us, the river flowing from north-west to south-east; but between us and the town of Dacca were two more rivers flowing parallel with the Ganges, viz., the Dullasery and

the Borigunga, on which the town of Dacca itself stands, and which, after flowing past the town, joins the Dullasery, which curves up towards it.

During the day I got into conversation with the commander of the starboard flat. We were passing rather near the right, or southern, bank, and he pointed to a village just visible in the distance. "I got into a terrible mess there some years ago," he said. "I had charge of three boats, country boats, not steamers, laden with country produce; but I wanted to get a cargo of bamboo matting, which they make here, to take to Chittagong (a district further to the south-east). I had with me a Yankee as mate, and I left him on board while I went on shore just there to bargain for these mats. I had a couple of Bengali men with me, and I could make myself understood.

"We got into conversation with the villagers, and they came in considerable numbers to bargain, and accompanied me, chaffering on the way, down to the river bank. As is usual, they carried their latties; and as is also usual, they got very excited in the bargaining; but we were all perfectly friendly. My Yankee mate, who was quite a novice in the country, had been looking at the proceedings through a glass, and seeing them gesticulating in a furious manner, thought they were about to attack me. He therefore got into a dinghee with a few of the crew, and came on shore in great haste, with a loaded revolver in his hand. Without saying a word to me, he fired the whole six barrels into the crowd, and I saw two men fall.

"At first the villagers were frightened, and ran away, and I foolishly stayed, hoping to explain matters; but they

returned in considerable force very soon, and made a rush upon us. There was nothing for it but to get to our boats as soon as possible; but before we could do this, they had knocked down three of our men. We at last managed to reach our boats; and as a favourable wind sprang up at that moment, I thought the best thing to do was to set sail and get away as quickly as possible. This was five years ago, and I have never heard anything more about it; but whenever I pass the spot, I think of what happened there. I fancy the villagers were afraid of getting into trouble about the row, as three of our men were, to the best of my belief, killed, and so never gave any information at the police station."

This was candid on his part, as he himself was bound by law to give immediate information of such an occurrence to the nearest magistrate or police station. I asked what had become of the Yankee. He said he had left India. But it was rather humiliating to me, as a member of the administration, to feel that such an occurrence had taken place in one of our oldest districts, and yet that no official had the slightest inkling of the matter.

After I had assumed charge of the Dacca district, I caused the registers of the police stations in this neighbourhood to be searched; but could find no entry of any sort on the subject. The real culprit was out of reach, and no further measures would have done any actual good.

Nevertheless, it is easy to understand how the matter remained unknown. The locality is on the confines of the Dacca and Backergunge districts, and a good way—probably twenty miles—from the nearest police station,

with various unbridged streams to cross between; and the village was doubtless seldom visited by the police inspector in charge. The chowkeydars, or village watchmen, —I was wrong in saying *no* official had an inkling of it,—doubtless knew of the occurrence, and were bound, as were also the neighbouring landholders bound, to report the matter to the police station. But the chowkeydar very much prefers to be on good terms with the landholder, who is always present on the spot, either himself or in the person of his agent, rather than with the more remote police official.

Further, the landholder pays his wages, and at the time I write of, there was no legal means of compelling payment, should he withhold them. The chowkeydars used to complain to us Magistrates that their wages were unpaid; and we, having no other power, used to summon the landholders in person to state why they objected to pay. This was merely a method of bullying them into payment; and, as far as my experience goes, was always effectual. This has been altered now; but, as things were, the landholders had much more influence over the chowkeydar than any police official or Magistrate, and indeed still have.

The chowkeydars, then, always reported all occurrences first to the landholders, and took their orders as to giving information to the officials. Do what we could, we could not prevent this. In this case, doubtless, the landholders ordered the matter to be kept quiet; and as the other party had disappeared and would not be likely to give information, there was no fear in that quarter. No good

was to be gained by telling the police; it would only bring them down to make a local inquiry in the village; the inspector would lodge there, and require supplies of food for himself and his constables; everybody would be bullied, summoned as witnesses, if not as defendants, and, in fact, all the trouble and bother entailed by an official visit would have to be undergone, and might be avoided. So, probably, the landholder imposed a small fine on the villagers, and thus not only escaped trouble, but made a little profit out of the transaction.

This shows the difficulty we officials have in getting even approximately at the truth. But these chowkeydars are the main links between us and the body of the people; and without them we should get to know very much less than we do at present. The only plan is to manipulate them skilfully; and, as it is, we get a great deal of information through the hostile spirit which frequently prevails between neighbouring landholders. Unfortunately, much of this even is false, and requires to be carefully sifted. A little further on, I shall be able to give in detail a case showing how false charges are got up against each other by hostile proprietors.

That night, at anchor, we had a terrific thunderstorm; and it was well we were in a somewhat sheltered spot, for the wind blew with terrible force. I asked the captain if he were not apprehensive of the steamer being struck, as she seemed to me to be just the very object to attract the lightning. He said he had been in many hundreds of similar storms, and had never seen a steamer struck, so that he felt no anxiety.

The next morning we were off at the first blush of dawn, and in a couple of hours arrived at the junction of the Ganges with the Megna, the expanse of water at the confluence of these two enormous streams being more like a sea than a river. Here we had to turn up north, against the current; but the influence of the tide from the Bay of Bengal is felt thus far, and as it was favourable, we made a rapid run up into the river Dullasery, near the mouth of which is situated Naraingunge, the port of Dacca.

Naraingunge is a thriving mart; and the establishment of the steamer traffic has done much to increase its importance, as a great many country boats from the neighbouring districts of Sylhet Mymensingh, Backergunge, and Tipperah bring the more valuable produce here to be shipped on board the steamers, and thus avoid the dangerous voyage through the Soonderbunds, in the slow and easily wrecked native vessels. The river Dullasery flows past it on the south, and the Lukhya, coming down from the rich district of Mymensingh, washes it on the east, and beyond the Lukhya is the old bed of the Brahmapootra, still navigable for a considerable distance northwards; though the main stream, the great drainage channel of Assam, has been turned aside by a piece of soil in the north of Mymensingh harder than the rest, and now flows down the western side of the Dacca District, through the channel called the "Jamoona," and joins the Ganges at Goalundo, leaving a breadth of country of sixty or seventy miles between its old and new courses.

Here we found two other steamers at anchor, which had come down from Sylhet and Cachar; and after casting off our two flats, we proceeded up the Dullasery to its junction with the Borigunga on which Dacca is situated. Naraingunge is connected by a metalled road eight miles long with Dacca—the only *metalled* road in the district. The other roads are few in number, for the rivers are the great highways, and nearly all the locomotion is done in boats. By the winding river the distance is thirteen miles; and this we accomplished in a couple of hours or so, reaching the city about 1 p.m.

The first sight of Dacca is very striking, and it reminded me somewhat of Venice, which I had visited during my late furlough; for it seems to rise out of the river on the banks of which it is built. We first passed the lines in which a native regiment is quartered, kept here in case of any sudden requirements on our North-Eastern frontier, and then came to an embankment faced with stone, constructed under the auspices of the late Commissioner by *voluntary* subscriptions from rich native residents.

It no doubt was an immense improvement to the place; for the bank had been broken and swampy, and now it was a fine promenade, in fact—to compare small things with great, on the principle of the Thames Embankment. Upon it were situated several fine-looking houses, some of them three storeys high; and I noticed that nearly all the houses I could see, built apparently for the occupation of Europeans, were of more than one storey, quite different to those in Tirhoot and Nuddea.

As we passed on, we came to the more thickly-built portion, inhabited by the native population, with a profusion of mosques and temples stretching up the river for two or three miles. The *coup d'œil* from the steamer being very picturesque.

At the landing-place, I found my predecessor, Leland, whom I was about to relieve, waiting to receive me. I had met him before, at the Sonepore race meeting. He was a bachelor, and was living with the Commissioner of the district,—also a bachelor,—in the first three-storeyed house we had passed on the embankment, and we were to put up with them until we had settled ourselves. Leaving our servants to jabber over our heavier baggage, we got into a "ticca gharry" "hired trap," a bit of civilization I had scarcely expected to find so far in the Mofussil, and were rattled along, down the main street of the town, to the Commissioner's house.

The native part looked busy, crowded, and prosperous; but as we got among the fine-looking houses in the European quarter, I could see my wife's face grow less and less bright, and I felt a feeling of heavy depression myself. There was an indescribable mouldiness about everything, that we had not been able to remark from the river, a sign of the terrible damp in which we were to live. And this was March, about the driest time of the whole year. This gloom was not lightened on driving into the Commissioner's compound, and under the mouldy portico of his house. I found that he did not use the lower parts to live in, but as an office for his clerks and a portion of his official records. The remainder being

kept in the ground floor of another three-storeyed house about a quarter of a mile distant.

Leland, who was really a man of iron, occupied one room on the ground floor as a sleeping apartment. He told me that neither malaria nor damp nor anything else had ever hurt him; and as long as I have known him I never knew him out of sorts for a day, though utterly careless of all the usual precautions.

The warmest and friendliest of welcomes from the Commissioner, Saunders, who had tiffin ready for us, did a good deal to efface our first gloomy ideas; and as our rooms were on the third storey, looking over the river, with a cool breeze blowing in, we were comfortable enough. In the evening the band of the regiment played on the embankment opposite the Commissioner's house, and the rank and fashion promenaded—a scene of gaiety such as I had never witnessed in any Mofussil civil station that I had previously visited.

Here I was introduced to most of my future associates —the Judge and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Allen, who occupied another of these two-storeyed houses; the Joint Magistrate, Lang, who would be my immediate subordinate, and his wife; the District Superintendent of Police, Peel, a bachelor; his assistant, Macrae, a Scotchman, with a very pretty wife; the Colonel of the regiment, a bachelor; with two subalterns, one married; the Banker, a bachelor (there was a branch of the Bank of Bengal here), and various others. There was a Government College at Dacca, the principal of which was not only married, but had a marriageable daughter, so that we

might be said to possess the material for what could be called a "ball," in the Mofussil.

At dinner that evening, I was remarking what an immense improvement the embankment was. "No credit belongs to me," said Saunders, "it was all done by my predecessor, Berkeley. You'll have the trouble of keeping it in order, so it is as well you approve of it."

"Yes," said Leland, "it took some trouble to get it done, and it takes some to keep it in repair. It was constructed, you know, by 'moral influence.' All the natives here were in great awe of Berkeley; and when he convened a meeting of the residents and suggested the undertaking, and that subscriptions should be raised, they came forward very liberally. If, however, any of them did not give as much as they ought, Berkeley let them know soon enough what he thought of them.

"For instance, there was one fellow here, son of a *nouveau riche*, but very rich withal, named Mohinee Mohun, who was not present at the meeting, but sent as a subscription 2,500 rs. = £250. Berkeley sent it back, wishing to know what he meant by presuming to offer such a sum. His messenger returned discomfited, but came back with 5,000 rs. This Berkeley also refused with contempt; and at last Mohinee, in despair, sent to inquire what he ought to give. Berkeley said, that in consideration of his wealth and the position he ought to take among his fellow-townsmen, he should not think less than 25,000 rs. a proper sum. And the money was sent at once.

"I did a little bit of Punjabi work myself." (Leland had been transferred to Bengal from the Punjaub, where things are done in a very high-handed manner by the conquering race.) "The garden wall of the house just this side of the band-stand ran down almost to the river; and when the embankment on both sides was completed, this bit of wall jutted out into the middle of it, and was a great eyesore. The house belonged to three brothers, who held it in joint tenancy in common. I tried hard to persuade them to let me curtail their garden, and so make the inner line of the promenade even. I never could find them all together; but they kept on saying that they would consult together and let me know. Each individual would say that he was willing, provided he could get the consent of the other two. So one day I collected secretly two hundred labourers, and went round in my buggy to each of the brothers, saying, 'If I can get the consent of the other two, will you let me do what I want?' Each said 'Yes;' so, when I had been to all three, I drove off to the coolies; in two hours the wall was down, and the materials all collected by the evening for rebuilding it farther back. The owners could not say anything against what had been done; and the next day the wall was rebuilt. They lost a little bit of land by this; but their property was so improved in value by the making of the embankment, that I don't think they had any right to complain."

I bethought me of my Durbhungah improvements, which were successful through very analogous measures.

As a body, the natives do not show any public spirit, and

energetic civilians supply it in this manner. I fear that, with one or two exceptions, all the subscribers would sooner have had their money than the embankment, and that this is the case with all our European improvements. At any rate at Durbhungah, my improvements had been distinctly for the benefit of the towns-people; whereas at Dacca it might be said that the embankment was more to the taste and advantage of the European than the native community, who, after, all cared very little about it. Then the question comes in, "Ought we not to teach them to care for and take interest in such things?" Whatever our duty may be, our efforts are very unpalatable to them.

The next morning Saunders took me out for a morning ride. He had his stable full of horses, and kept a native jockey to ride those that he had not time to exercise himself. In fact, I may say that he was the most earnest sportsman all round that I have ever met, except that he did not care for racing. His stock of guns was large and select, his apparatus comprised all the newest and most elaborate inventions, and he had five elephants of his own, three of known reputation for staunchness, and two of lighter build for baggage purposes.

We rode out north, away from the river, on the road to Mymensingh, passing the bungalow used as a bank, the Church, the Cutcherries,—built in the new style,—across a bridge over the Dullye Creek, which embraces about half the town in a semi-circle between itself and the river, down a long and broad street, finally debouching on a wide plain—to our left being the race-course, and to our right the deserted cantonments where the regiment

stationed at Dacca was formerly quartered, but which had to be relinquished on account of the malarious fever which attacked all who ventured to sleep there.

An open piece of ground on the city side of the lines was pointed out to me by Saunders as the polo ground, while beyond, to the north, commenced the immense jungle which stretches away to the Mymensingh district and joins the Mudhopore forest, and with which I became much more intimately acquainted afterwards. Saunders told me the town was not healthy, and that cleanliness and sanitation wanted much looking after. Both eyes and nose afforded full evidence of this state of things, which was not improved by the hot March sun pouring down upon us; and I was glad to get back to my bath and breakfast.

I found Leland was not eager to make over charge for a couple of days. He had been promoted to act as Judge of the neighbouring district of Mymensingh; but he regretted leaving lively Dacca—that is, lively in comparison—for the dulness and solitude of Nusseerabad, its head-quarters. I accordingly passed the morning in making calls on the residents, after the Anglo-Indian fashion, among others, on the regiment. To get to the lines, I had to pass over a lofty suspension bridge crossing the Dullye Creek, where it falls into the river, which had been built by voluntary subscriptions raised through the moral influence of some predecessor of Berkeley's.

In the evening my wife and I went out house-hunting; and we pitched upon one which the newly incorporated body of Municipal Commissioners and the Clergyman

(who was a grass widower, his wife being at home) had taken between them. The lower part was to be used as an office, and the upper floor as the Clergyman's residence. It was not on the river bank, but it had a nice compound and looked less mouldy than the other houses. The rooms were large sized and well proportioned, and it seemed to me that we might break through the Dacca rule and actually have a dining-room and some bedrooms on the ground floor.

As I was to be *ex officio* Chairman of the Municipal Commissioners, I had no difficulty in arranging that they should go elsewhere, as they had done nothing but put down a few mats on the ground floor; and I settled with the Clergyman to give him the top floor of a neighbouring house which I selected for the Municipal Office, and which suited him even better than the other, as it was cheaper and yet gave him as much accommodation as he wanted. This was a good thing accomplished; but the house took a week to prepare for our occupation, and in the meantime we stayed on with Saunders, who had also given us an out-house wherein to stow our furniture.

Had it not been for this sort of hospitality, I really don't know what we should have done; for there was no public hotel, or even dâk bungalow, where we could have lodged, and our only resource would have been to hire a budgerow (house-boat) and live on the river. This latter is a plan adopted by some officials whose duties necessitate their travelling very much in these parts. One of them, the Inpector of Schools of this the South-Eastern division,—which comprised the six districts in the Dacca commissionership,—

and the three in that of Chittagong, an area of over 40,000 square miles, had a boat built for himself, much longer than they usually are, with room for ten oarsmen, so that the boat could actually row against a wind, which is not possible with most of these. He had it well fitted with book-shelves and cases for botanical specimens, of which he had made a large and valuable collection.

But one night he was anchored in the big river Megna, up which the tidal wave rushes with the speed of a race-horse; and his boat was torn away from its anchorage, while he had only just time to trust himself to the water, and was swept away to a shallow place where a "snag" afforded him a refuge till the morning. No vestige of the boat was seen again, though the boatmen, who all swim like fish, were saved. He was taken off in the morning by a passing boat and conveyed to the nearest station, Noakholly. But his work of years was destroyed, and he escaped only with his life. It was a wonder that no alligator had attacked him; but the recital of his experience made me particularly careful afterwards whenever I found it necessary to anchor for the night in any of the big rivers.

The next day I went to the Cutcherry, and commenced the work of taking over charge. Two new offices had been built, one for myself and one for the Judge and subordinate judicial officers. They were commodious buildings, raised on a foundation of masonry about five feet in height, sixty feet broad, and 250 feet long. A margin was left for a verandah all round, and the remaining space divided into Court rooms. At the four corners were four extra rooms, occupying space that would otherwise have been

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included in the verandah. One of these was used as my retiring room, one as the Treasury officer's room, one as the office for the registration of deeds, and the fourth for miscellaneous purposes. The verandah formed an arcade, and certain spaces in it were let off to the attorneys for small rents which entitled them to lay down their mats and so make consulting spaces, for they could not be called rooms. A parapet ran round the top, the intention being, that in case of necessity the place could be used for defensive purposes the arches being bricked up and the defence conducted from the roof. But to make this of any use, we should have had to retain possession of the neighbouring houses, many of which were higher and would command the top of the Cutcherry. I did not place much faith in these facilities for defence, but lived in the tolerably safe hope they would not be required in my time; though the example of Arrah showed what could be done by a few resolute Englishmen behind any sort of protection.

My first task was to count the stamps, and this took me the whole morning, for there were a large number and I should have to sign a certificate relieving Leland from all responsibility as to the amount in store when taking over charge. The next thing was to count the money in the Treasury, and the opium. This did not take so long, as the money could be weighed. I then made the acquaintance of the officers in the various departments, of the Revenue, Excise, and Registration departments. I found the vernacular records in some confusion, and a special establishment had been sanctioned by the Board of Reve-

nue to get them arranged in accordance with the rules drawn up by them.

I also found in another house a survey party employed in writing up the work done by them in the field some three years previously, making copies of torn maps and plans and the records relating to them. These were in charge of a special native Deputy Collector who had been placed under my supervision, and a great nuisance I afterwards found him.

In another house, rented for the purpose, the Joint Magistrate, Lang, and the District Superintendent of Police, Peel, held their offices, and seemed to be very much overcrowded; but a new cutcherry for their accommodation was in progress.

The omlah, or clerks, were given to understand that I would take over charge the next day, and were instructed to prepare the formal letters. In the evening I played my first game at rackets in the Dacca racket-court, and was pleased to find I could hold my own though there were better players here than either at Mozufferpore or Kishnaghur.

The following day I rode down to the gaol with Leland. I found it badly situated, in the middle of the town, and surrounded by walls by no means high enough. The Public Works Department had been making certain alterations here, and had erected a new arched gateway, over which a new house was in course of construction for the gaoler. I asked when the gate would be inserted, and was told that no provision had been made for a gate. My first letter written after taking over charge of the gaol, was to the Executive Engineer of the district, requesting that a gate

might be supplied, and stating that the omission of such a provision was very extraordinary. I was informed that a gate had not been considered necessary, as there was always a guard at the entrance to the gaol; but he had referred the matter to his superior the Superintending Engineer. His superior apparently thought differently, for in due time a very good gate appeared.

It had not been the custom here to make over charge of the gaol to the Joint Magistrate; and not wishing to make unnecessary alterations, I kept it in my own hands. An Armenian was holding the office of gaoler at this time; but Leland informed me he was not giving satisfaction, and that the Inspector-General of gaols was about to remove him. There were about 500 prisoners in the gaol, and the place did not give me the idea of having been under vigorous control.

On our way back we looked into the Lunatic Asylum, capable of holding some 300 lunatics, and of which I was an *ex officio* visitor, and also the Mitford Hospital, managed by a Committee, of which I was an *ex officio* member. It had been built with funds bequeathed by a deceased civilian of that name. His family had litigated the matter as far as they could, and as the costs came out of the estate the hospital was not so large as it otherwise would have been. But still it was of great benefit to Dacca. It was at present in charge of a native Sub-assistant Surgeon under the immediate supervision of the Civil Surgeon.

About midday Leland made over formal charge of the district to me, and I found myself chief executive officer in control of an area of 2,897 square miles, with a popula-

tion of 1,853,416. This gives an average of 639 persons to the square mile, and as a large portion of the district is covered with jungle, the density of population in the cultivated parts is very great indeed. In the subdivision of Moonshigunge, which is on the south bank of the Dullasery, lying between that river and the Ganges, the average is 1031 to the square mile. This area is entirely rural. It may be mentioned that in the United Kingdom the average is 239, in Germany, 189, and in France, 180 to the square mile.

My chief subordinates were Lang the Joint Magistrate, and Peel the Superintendent of Police. There were also at head-quarters three native Deputy Magistrates and Collectors, and an Assistant Magistrate, a young civilian with only "special" powers, which latter sat in the building occupied by Lang. There was a native Sub-Registrar, employed solely in the registration of deeds. and the native Survey Deputy Collector mentioned above, Three native Deputy Magistrates and Collectors were in charge of the three subdivisions of Manikgunge, Moonshigunge, and Madaripore. The last named, was situated partially in the neighbouring district of Backergunge, and the unfortunate officer in charge had to prepare double sets of returns, one for the area situated in each district.

The head-quarters area, comprising all the district not included in the three above-mentioned subdivisions, was under my own immediate charge, not having been made into a separate subdivision under the Joint Magistrate, as in Nuddea and many other districts. An idea had existed in the head of some one high in authority

in Calcutta,—I don't know who,—that the Magistrate got to know more of what was going on, if left in immediate charge of the head-quarters subdivision. To me this appeared very unmeaning. It only made this difference, that in this one subdivision all criminal cases and rent suits had to be instituted in the Court of the Magistrate and Collector, and distributed by him to the subordinate officers for trial, instead of their being brought in the Court of the Joint-Magistrate, who was also Deputy Collector, in the first instance.

As it was, I was not bound by law to try a single criminal or original rent suit; but, in all the subdivisions equally, I could transfer any suit from the file of any officer to my own, or that of any other of my subordinates properly empowered. By the Rules of the Board of Revenue, I was bound to be absent from head-quarters in camp for three months in the year on inspection duty, and for this period I was empowered to make over charge of the subdivision to the Joint Magistrate. There was also no reason why I should be required to have more detailed knowledge of what went on in the Sudder subdivision than in any other.

As Magistrate and Collector, my work was principally that of supervision; though on the Revenue side there were innumerable matters that I had to take up personally. The High Court, on the other hand, were always urging Magistrates to try important criminal cases themselves, by way of keeping their hand in at judicial work; for, as then arranged, promotion lay from Collector to Judge, the highest grade Collector receiving 1,916 rs. a month, and

the Judge 2,500 rs. This has very recently and very properly been altered, and the executive and judicial officers placed on a footing of equality. The duties of Magistrate and Collector are at least as important as those of a Judge of a district, and certainly call for much greater versatility than mere judicial work.

Most Magistrates would keep on their own file a few important original cases in the course of the year; but my own experience was, that these interfered very much with one's executive work. An important case would probably last some days; and it was not possible to give proper and continuous attention to it, without ignoring for the time other miscellaneous duties. Now, however, the executive and judicial lines diverge after the office of Joint Magistrate has been passed; and the Magistrate and Collector being placed on an equality in point of pay with the Judge, the promotion goes on in parallel lines. Officials select their lines according to their tastes, and the Executives are no longer bothered by the High Court about judicial work.

The District Superintendent of Police is a very important subordinate, and I was fortunate in having Peel as mine, in this my first district. He was not a military man, and on that account more easy to deal with. The district was divided into twelve principal Police areas, with head police stations, "thannahs," presided over by sub-inspectors, and sundry outposts in each under head constables. There were five Inspectors, peripatetic officers, among whom the supervision of these divisions was equally distributed, and who were bound personally to take up investigations in important cases. There were about 600

constables, including the reserve; and Peel had the direction and control of the whole, having also to look after their education (as far as possible), clothing, pay, and the police buildings, generally mat and thatch.

The municipal police, in towns where the Municipal Act had been introduced, were also appointed and controlled by him, and he had the supervision of the three thousand chowkedars, or village watchmen, in the various villages throughout the district. At his discretion he could personally take up the police inquiry into any case; and in any very serious one he was expected to go himself to the spot.

He received daily reports from every police station and outpost; these were extracts from the daily register, and showed all the entries made on the day to which they related. Copies of these were forwarded to the subdivisional officers, and after them to myself. But in all important cases, such as murder, dacoity, rioting, or heavy thefts, special reports were sent to me, giving full details of the occurrence, and the steps taken by the police. I was supposed to pass orders on these, and forward the reports with my orders to the Commissioner. Under an active and intelligent Police Superintendent the orders would generally amount to the remark, "I await further report," and this too would satisfy the Commissioner; but these reports kept the Magistrate *au courant* of what was going on in the case, and also gave him an opportunity of correcting blunders or reprehending delay on the part of the police.

As a general rule, I found that in cases of dacoity,

heavy theft, or murder among the lower classes, the native police would use their best energies to discover the actual criminals and bring them to justice; but in cases of murder the result of jealousy or some other motive of intrigue, where the richer classes were concerned, they required very careful looking after, and the presence of an European officer on the spot was very necessary.

I may instance a case of rioting where two rival Zemindars, Chandee Churn and Boloram Khan, were contending for the possession of a village cutcherry, or office for the collection of rent and transaction of other landholder's business. The first report from the local police was to the effect that the retainers and a number of peasantry of each of the hostile Zemindars had come into collision, and that five or six men had been wounded, and one man killed. It was in the dry season, the place was only twenty miles from Dacca, and the country was ridable, so Peel took horse at once, and got there in three or four hours after receiving the report.

His first demand very properly was, to see the body of the man who had been killed. He was shown the body of an old man with a couple of spear wounds; and the story now was, that he had been care-taker in the cutcherry, on part of Chandee Churn, and was alone there when the party of Boloram came and wished to force an entrance, and on his calling out "duhai," had ruthlessly murdered him. Peel looked at the body, saw it was that of a feeble and emaciated old creature, and that the wounds looked very dry and unusual altogether. The thought at once flashed across him that this corpse had

been substituted for the real one, by Chandee Churn's party, with the idea of making out that they were not furnished with regular fighting clubmen, and, in fact, that they were altogether the innocent and aggrieved party.

He had this body at once despatched to Dacca for examination by the Civil Surgeon, and went on into the neighbouring village, in the hope of discovering something further. In the mean time, each party had accused the other of being the aggressors, and each had given to the police the names of those they alleged to be prominent on the opposite side; but of course Boloram's party would not admit that anybody had been killed on the other side. Some of these had been arrested, but many had not, among others a man called Lukkeekunt Ghose, on the side of Chandee Churn.

Peel was sitting in the cutcherry over which there had been so much contention, when a man came up to him and said he wished to be enrolled as a constable. Peel said he did not want to enlist any more at present. The man replied, he could do some service if he liked. "What?" said Peel. "I must tell you in secret," said the man. Peel took him aside. "Go to the house of Lukkeekunt's father," he said, "at Meangunge, three miles from here." Peel said nothing more, but had his pony brought, rode over at once to Meangunge, got hold of the village chowkeydar, and made him come with him to Lukkeekunt's father's house. Outside he listened, and heard lamentations, pushed his way in and found the women mourning over the corpse of a fine young man with a terrible wound in its head, evidently the cause of death.

Matters after this became easy enough. The Civil Surgeon reported that the old man whose corpse had been originally sent in had died of fever; and the wounds had clearly been made after death. It finally transpired that both parties were to blame, and both were punished, though Chandee Churn's had been the real aggressors, and Lukkeekunt one of the principal fighting men on his side. But if Peel had not behaved so promptly, it would have been, perhaps, impossible to prove the truth. The informer received his wished-for reward. But further on I shall be able to give a very curious instance of the way in which false cases were got up.

We got established in our own house some four days after Leland's departure. It was very conveniently situated, being about fifty yards from the racket court, 200 from my cutcherry, and 100 from Lang's. The Municipal Office was next door. It had a good compound, with stabling for eight or ten horses, and good masonry outhouses for kitchen and servants. On the ground floor was a dining-room about forty-five feet long by thirty broad, two large rooms usable as bedrooms but without bathrooms, and three other smaller rooms. The rooms on the upper storey corresponded to these, but there was a verandah on one side of the house only, on both storeys. The walls were two feet thick, and the masonry good. The verandah on the upper storey was covered with a masonry roof, supported by three pillars springing from the verandah below, some forty feet high, and the spaces between the pillars were protected by fixed venetian blinds. For all this I paid the sum of £11 a month, plus municipal

taxes, which amounted to 7½ per cent. on the rental. I had no lease from my native landlord, but we arranged everything verbally. He was a close-fisted Hindu, but we never had any disagreement on the score of the lease.

Bent on hospitality, I wished to make the two large rooms on the ground floor useful as bedrooms, by the addition of two bath-rooms. This could be easily done, at little expense, by building them on to the outsides of the rooms, and could be well done for 250 rs., equal to £25. I offered the landlord, if he would do this, an extra rent of 10 rs., or £1, a month, so that in two years the whole cost of these would have been recouped. He consented, after much hesitation, saying that "every sahib wanted something different, and that probably the next sahib would want them pulled down." He then commenced, after about two months' delay, to build them in accordance with Hindu notions of economy.

He sent round the town, and had all the old bricks he could pick up for nothing collected, and bought a few others. It took about six weeks to get these together. He then had them built up with mud for mortar. I did not care, as I didn't think this much mattered for mere bath-rooms. He then collected a lot of old worm-eaten beams, and "burgas" for the support of the roof; and then commenced the process of dammering. This was done by a number of old women and little boys. Some old tiles were placed on the burgas, and then a mixture dignified with the name of mortar was poured on the top of these, and the old women and little boys beat it down flat with wooden spats to the tune of some monotonous song.

This had gone on for one day; and on the second day, about 10 a.m., while I was engaged in my writing room on the other side of the house, I heard a noise as of an avalanche, and then shouts, groans, and lamentations. I rushed out, and found the whole erection had collapsed, and that the twenty-three women and children were buried in the *débris*. A lot of outsiders had rushed in through my open gates to see what was the matter, and I heard some of them saying that somebody must be dead in the ruins. It occurred to me that probably some false claim might be made, so I told my chuprassies to shut the gates, and let no one out until all the masons had been collected. This was done with marvellous celerity; and, wonderful to relate, all the old women had escaped without a scratch, and only one boy had a wound in his leg. I collected them all, had them all counted, and let them go.

In about half an hour came my landlord's man of business, whom I refused to see on principle. However, on going to office, I found him outside my door, and he prostrated himself to the ground on seeing me. "Go out of my sight," I said, "I have had nothing but trouble for four months about these wretched bath-rooms. I will not have anything built by you or your master. It would probably fall down and kill me. As it is, I shall probably indict you both, under the Penal Code, for endangering human life by culpable carelessness."

He began to say "that his master was in a state of senselessness from the calamity, that he did not think so much of his own loss, which was enormous, as of my anger," etc., etc. I drove him away; but the next day I

found the landlord himself waiting outside; and after many apologies, he said, "Try me once more, and I will build you good bath-rooms in six weeks." I allowed myself to be mollified, and I am bound to add that he kept his word.

On the whole, I found Dacca more lively than any previous Mofussil station in which I had been quartered. In the first place, I had plenty of work, and, wet or dry, there was always some amusement in the evening, when the day's office work was done. Four days a week we played rackets, and twice a week polo.

This latter requires no description, now that it is so familiar in England; but I will say that in Dacca we had special facilities for playing it well. The game is the national sport of the Munnipoorees, a tribe residing on our north-eastern frontier. Every Munnipooree is a polo player from his youth upwards. He gets possession of first a pony and then a wife; and if he fall into bad circumstances, sells first his wife and then his pony.

The tribe was continually giving trouble, and we had lots of little wars with them. One result was, that a number of these had been made over to us as hostages; and they were kept as prisoners of war, under my surveillance, in a village on the borders of the jungle just to the north of Dacca. They were submissive and respectful, and never attempted to escape as long as I had knowledge of them.

Some of these became our tutors at polo, and did not disdain to receive pecuniary assistance from us, though they were all chiefs in their own tribe. Their skill and

pliancy of body was remarkable. They could hit on either side of their pony, in front of his head or round his tail with equal facility, and rode almost as well barebacked as with a saddle. Our ponies averaged between ten and eleven hands, and I must assert that I think there was much more poetry about the game as played on these little animals than as done at home on what we in India should call horses, and mounted on which it is not possible to make such skilful use of the stick.

I became the fortunate possessor of two excellent ponies, one of which I purchased from a Munnipooree named Atomba Sing. I really could have guided him with a silken bridle, and his former owner used to let the reins drop on his neck while at full gallop, and seize his stick with both hands, in order to have more power for the blow. Though not very exciting to the uninitiated spectator, to the player the game is the most attractive I know, and the sensation of getting the ball to the rear of the adverse side, and of knowing that all you have to do is to gallop and hit straight for their goal, with the whole field racing behind you, must be felt to be appreciated. It was a great feature in our Dacca life; and I used to try and arrange my office work so as always to be able to leave office in good time on polo evenings.

Soon after my arrival, we opened our club house, which merely consisted of two rooms, with a balcony to the upper one, looking over the racket court. These were built on to the court, the lower room serving as a dressing room, and the upper as a billiard and card room. As this was an institution purely for the benefit of the men, we

sought to enlist the sympathy of the ladies by giving an entertainment to celebrate the opening. Accordingly we had a luncheon and a racket match afterwards. Our best player was appointed President, and I was Vice-President. I have forgotten to mention that our society included the editor of the English local paper, the *Dacca News*, and his wife. They were somewhat pretentious, and evidently very touchy people, who seemed to think that their position as representing the press was not sufficiently recognised in Dacca. On this occasion the lady sat next me at lunch, and after one or two remarks, said, by way of impressing me, that she had a cousin who was a Colonel; she added that he did not allow his officers to play rackets, as he thought it a vulgar game. Considering the occasion, this appeared to me rather a trenchant remark. Perhaps my countenance betrayed my thoughts, for she went on to say that she and her husband had a short time before been staying with the Bishop of Calcutta, and that he had a racket court in his "compound." This was probably by way of further impressing me, and possibly with a view to soften the asperity of her previous remark.

But everybody who has been in Calcutta knows that the Bishop's palace is opposite the Cathedral, and that the racket court is close to the latter (a very unsightly object), but that the public road runs between it and the Palace.

However, I only said that I believed the Bishop to be a very good racket player.

She looked at me doubtfully; but fortunately a move was made from the table, and the rest of the entertainment passed off without further unpleasantness.

I fear I was no favourite with her or her husband, and he took many an opportunity of using his pen against me.

Our clergyman was frequently obliged to be absent from Dacca on Sundays, to give other communities in outlying districts the benefit of his presence, and on these occasions I had to make arrangements for service, the result being generally that I had to read prayers and a sermon myself. The first time that this happened after our above-mentioned lunch, the *Dacca News* had a leading article on the irreverent manner in which I had done this. My wife was indignant, and wished me to discontinue the paper; but I thought it more magnanimous to take no notice.

To do the man justice, I believe he would have conducted his paper on proper principles had he been a free agent; but he was obliged to obey the wishes of his local patrons.

With some of these I came into collision soon after this. One day the Inspector of Schools, Dwyer, came to me privately with an important case he wished me to investigate, and of which he had drawn up a regular brief.

The facts he had arrived at were shortly as follows. A rich Armenian resident in the town had died, leaving an illegitimate son, as heir to the bulk of his property and also providing for the establishment and maintenance of a school for Armenian children. This will had been proved some three years previously, and the school also established. It came in the ordinary course under Dwyer's inspection. He found it in a miserable condition, and very inadequately supplied with funds.

He then obtained a copy of the will, and during his

inquiries was informed that the will was a forgery, that old Carrapiet, the deceased, had left a great deal more money than that set forth in the will, and the bulk of it to the school; that the young Carrapiet was really heir to a very small sum; that old Carrapiet disliked him, and had very strong doubts whether he really was his son; that certain other principal Armenians in Dacca knew this, and had only allowed the will to pass on condition of receiving a large sum of money, about 100,000 rs., equal to £10,000, which they had divided between them; that in order to settle all claims against the estate of the deceased speedily, and to avoid inquiry, they had borrowed 100,000 rs. from the principal Mohammedan landholder in the district.

He was also informed that the original will was still in existence in Dacca, and might possibly be found. He wished me to prosecute young Carrapiet and four Armenians of position in the town for forgery, abetment of forgery, and criminal misappropriation of property. The matter certainly appeared to demand investigation, and as it was necessary to keep the thing quite secret, I determined not to employ the agency of the police in the matter.

Dwyer placed his local Sub-Inspector, an intelligent young Brahmin, Kali Kumar Chatterjee, at my disposal, and I employed him to see if evidence to prove the above-mentioned facts was procurable. I also personally made such inquiries as I could.

In about a week he informed me that the facts were known to every one in the bazaar; and though many respectable people wished that they should be brought to

light and the dividers of the spoil punished, they were afraid to move in the matter for fear of the power of these Armenians. But he had been told that the money advanced on the loan taken from the rich Mohammedan landholder had been paid into the bank of Bengal, to the credit of young Carrapiet, and that it had been divided by cheques given by him to the rest. He also stated the bond given for the loan had been duly registered, and that a copy of it could be procured. I accordingly authorized him to procure a copy, and we found that the money had been really borrowed at ten per cent., and that the four Armenians, whom I may call A, B, C, and D, were securities.

I then got permission to examine the record of the probate case in the Civil Court, where I found the will had been proved according to the forms of law, but that no sort of real inquiry into its validity had been held. I then examined the books of the Bank of Bengal, and ascertained that a day or two after the will had passed the Court, young Carrapiet had given cheques for about 100,000 rupees to these four persons.

I now thought I had sufficient evidence on which to proceed, the more so as I had a hope of finding the original will. One of the Armenians, D, had died; but I made up my mind to issue warrants for the others. I inserted a bail clause, so as not to put them under any unnecessary restraint.

Kali Kumar was somewhat aghast at my temerity. He said "You will never get a jury in Dacca to convict them. I was once on a jury myself in a case in which B (who,

among many other avocations, was a pleader) defended the accused; and the majority of the jury would not convict, because they were afraid of offending B if they did."

I recollect that I issued the warrants on a Tuesday, and my principal reason for not issuing summonses, was that a steamer was starting the next morning for Calcutta, and I thought the accused might abscond.

It was about five in the afternoon, and I had signed the warrants in my writing room in my own house, which was on the first floor, and not protected by a verandah. I had been sitting with my back close to the window, which faced the door opening on to the staircase, and had just gone out to stroll over to the racket court, a few yards distant,—a thunder storm was threatening,—when there came a vivid flash of lightning which I saw strike my house. I hurried back, and found that the fluid had struck the masonry cornice just above the window above described, destroyed the windows altogether, having blown pieces of them down the stairs, had then descended to the corresponding room below, destroyed the venetian blinds and windows, and finally made a hole in the earth outside, about three inches in diameter and a foot in depth. My writing room was covered with broken bits of window-glass and wood, but no further harm was done. My wife and a lady, who were in the drawing-room adjoining, said they felt as if they had received a sharp box on the ear, but were not otherwise hurt. It was a narrow escape for me; and had I any belief in omens, this might have been considered as anything but favourable.

There was considerable excitement in Dacca on the arrest

of these men. The first hearing of the case was fixed for that day week, and in the meantime I made every effort to get the original will and evidence as to the falsity of that propounded. I did find three or four Armenians who said they could give valuable evidence in Court. At the first hearing of the case they were examined; but their courage failed them, and they did not act up to their promises, only stating facts which, though very suspicious, did not prove anything. They were cross-examined by B, who managed to impugn their characters to such an extent that I began to believe one Armenian was as bad as another.

I was glad when the day was over, for it was not agreeable to see these men in such a position, who were the leaders of their own society in the place, with whom I had been on terms of a tolerably friendly acquaintance, and who were all members of the Municipal Committee.

When matters had got thus far, Dwyer, who had been of considerable use to me, was ordered away to another province, and so I was left alone. I adjourned the case for a week, and in the meantime got information that a Mohammedan, named Ameer Ali, was the forger of the false will, and that he had possession of the original will upon which the forged one was based, the amounts and their distribution only being altered. This information was brought to me by my "road overseer," Shircore, an Armenian also; but who, for some reason or other, did not mix much with his own people.

I urged him on to further discoveries; and one morning he galloped into my compound, rushed to my room with-

out any ceremony, and said, "I have seen it, I have seen it, I have seen the will. Ameer Ali has it and will give it up to you."

I was carried away by his enthusiasm, ordered my buggy at once, and drove down with him to Ameer Ali's house in the town beyond the gaol. I found him in undress, a lanky, hungry-looking Mohammedan, with a throat like a vulture.

"Where is the will?" I said.

"What will?" he replied.

"The will you showed to Shircore just now."

"I showed no will."

Shircore's face fell.

"What did you see," I asked him.

"I only saw the corner of a document," he said, "which he showed me, and I was in such a hurry to tell you that I came to you at once."

"Do you think," said Ameer Ali, "that if I had the will I would show it to any one at such risk to myself? Even if a large sum were offered me, I should have been afraid to show it."

He was clearly open to a bid. But as a Magistrate I could not offer a money bribe. My fingers itched to clutch his vulture-like throat, and wring the will out of him. However, I restrained myself. I said, "I offer you a free pardon for any complicity in the transaction."

"I know nothing of any will," he replied.

I had no police with me, or I could have surrounded his house and searched it then and there; but I believe he had placed it elsewhere after Shircore's departure, on the

chance of my coming. I got nothing out of him, and went away; but I instructed Kali Kumar and Shircore to watch him, and they ascertained that he had gone to the house of the rich Mohammedan landholder, and offered the will for sale to him, but he had refused to buy it. "It was nothing to him," he said.

I did not speak to him on the subject, for I did not expect to get the truth from him; but a day or two afterwards I got his son to go out for a drive with me to look at some projected improvements in the town, he being a Municipal Commissioner. He was a manly young fellow, of English education, and I abruptly introduced the subject of the will, saying, "Do you know about that will being shown to your father?"

"I was not present," he said, "but I heard that it was shown to him, and he declined to buy it. I heard afterwards that it was burned, that some Armenian had given 1,000 rs. for it."

My faithful emissaries to whom I related this, told me afterwards that they had heard in this Mohammedan's palace, that the son had been foolish enough to relate this conversation to his father, who had given him a good beating for it, though he was over twenty-four, and the eldest son and joint-owner of his property.

To avoid further details, I may add that I could not get hold of this original will, that I was obliged to abandon the charge of forgery, and that I finally committed the accused to the Sessions on a charge of criminal misappropriation of property. They reserved their defence, but B, who was rather obstreperous, begged leave to read a

protest. I allowed this, and he read out a carefully composed paper, commenting on my conduct, and showing that I had been watched in every detail of my movements since the issue of the warrants. He mentioned, among other things, my visit to the house of Ameer Ali. It was very impudent throughout, but I told him that I always allowed great latitude to defendants, and should merely order it to be filed with the record.

After committal, I considered the case important enough to be laid before the Advocate-General in Calcutta, for his advice as to its conduct at the forthcoming Sessions, the more so as I was informed that the accused had retained the leading counsel in Calcutta to defend them.

Accordingly, I had copies made of all the proceedings and documents, which were very lengthy, and made them over to Kali Kumar, who was to start in a swift boat for Calcutta, as the weekly steamer had just left. That night we had a cyclone. It began to blow hard between nine and ten p.m., and raged throughout the night. After-reports showed that we were merely on the edge of the circular storm, which had travelled up from the south-east, but it was the most severe blow I have ever happened to experience.

Fortunately for me, all my venetian blinds opened outwards, so it was the tendency of the wind to blow them more closely together, but I had to tie them with strong cords to prevent their being blown in altogether. The fixed venetian blind shades in the verandah were blown away; and the gusts of wind striking the house, which was very strongly built, made it tremble as if they had been

waves of the sea. I went out about six the next morning to look at the river. The wind had now lulled a good deal, and there was not much water in the channel, but still the spray was dashing over the embankment, and where the eye generally wandered over hundreds of native boats of all sorts and sizes, *not one* was visible; but the water and the shore were covered with minute pieces of plank.

There was scarcely a thatched hut in the town that had not been unroofed; and when I went to office I found it necessary to make it a holiday, as nearly every one present had some damage to repair—officials and suitors alike.

I began to feel very anxious about Kali Kumar; but he turned up in the afternoon with a fragment of wood in his hand about two feet long, and six inches broad. "This is the largest remnant of my boat," he said. He had anchored a few miles above Dacca, in what the boatmen thought a secure spot; but the wind had torn them from their shelter, hurled their boat against the opposite and exposed bank, and broken it into small pieces. All our documents were gone, and all his own notes on the case. Nothing was to be done but to get fresh copies made, and these were ready in time for the next weekly steamer.

By this time the Calcutta newspapers had begun to insert articles upon this peculiar case, though the Dacca news had observed a most decorous silence. At first I received information that the Government had determined to appoint a young barrister to prosecute. It seems that Government cases, unless of great public importance, and

triable at the Presidency towns, are made over to some young and inexperienced member of the legal profession, because such services are cheaply procured; and as they are generally opposed to the best talent available, Government frequently gets cast.

Finally, I received a telegram that Government had decided to offer no evidence at the forthcoming Sessions, and that the accused must be acquitted. Though an official ought to have no personal feelings about any case, I must confess that I was much chagrined when thinking of the hours of mental and physical labour I had spent over this. Besides this, there is no provision in the Criminal Procedure Code for such treatment of a case in the Mofussil, though it might have been in accordance with the English forms of law prevailing in the Presidency towns. The judge, I think, ought to have insisted that the case should proceed.

However, I afterwards received official information that the Advocate General had met counsel retained on the opposite side, and ascertained that he had a defence, which was good as the indictment was at present framed. It was that the will did not cover the whole property left by old Carrapiet, and that young Carrapiet and the other accused had merely divided the residue among them; there had, therefore, been no criminal misappropriation of property. He, therefore, thought it better to withdraw from the prosecution in its present form; and, as he was morally certain that the will was a forgery, to impugn it in the Civil Court, get restitution of the money taken under it, and finally prosecute the accused for forgery

and abetment, including also young Carrapiet, whom I had not committed for trial, as I had abandoned that charge.

I felt, unfortunately, too sure that they would not get evidence to procure a conviction for forgery; and as a fact, in the end, Government took no more active steps in the matter.

Now was the time of triumph of the *Dacca News*. For the next six weeks it was filled with abuse of me. Nothing was too bad to say of me. "I was a scandal to the Service, petitions would be presented to Government for my removal, and I was to be criminally prosecuted." The rancour of the owners, who had some ground for being annoyed with me, was aided by the spite of the editor. My wife was again very angry, but I decided to take no notice; and though I discontinued reading the paper, I continued to take and pay for it. Saunders was very sympathetic.

"Treat it with contempt," he said; "and recollect that we officials have to put up with more insults than any other class of people."

It was hard that I should be so abused for attempting to bring four men to justice, who had knowingly abetted forgery, and despoiled Government of £10,000, intended for the promotion of education. It does not say much for the moral atmosphere of Dacca, that though hundreds of persons knew the facts, I could get no one to take the trouble or run the risk of giving direct evidence in the matter; that the largest landholder in the district, an extraordinary member of the Council of the Governor-

General of India, had actually assisted these proceedings by a loan of money (for it is morally certain that he knew all about them); and that when everything could have been proved by the production of the original will, and he could have put himself perfectly in the right by assisting me to get it, he did not do so.

Doubtless, most people thought that there was no great harm in robbing the Government; and then, again, that these Armenians were rich and powerful men, permanent residents in Dacca, and it was more expedient to keep on good terms with them, than, on grounds of public morality, to assist an official who would probably not be among them for more than three years at the outside.

Of course no steps of any sort were taken against me. I came to the conclusion, from this result, that it does not answer for a magistrate to act as his own detective. He is hampered by his position, and this interferes with efficient action.

The Court Inspector, Juggut Chunder, an old officer of some standing, who looked after the conduct of police cases in the Dacca Courts, said to me afterwards, "You should not have gone to Ameer Ali's house in that way. Had you asked me, I should have said, Send a message to say you do not believe that he has the real document, and that it must be placed for examination in the hands of some trustworthy go-between for inspection. You might have appointed me to inspect it; and I should then have offered some money down, and so much more afterwards if it procured a conviction. I should have had a bag with me, containing, not rupees, but pice, or something that

made a noise like rupees when shaken; and once we had got hold of the will, we could have done what we liked."

Perhaps I mismanaged the case; but everything I did would have borne the closest scrutiny.

And yet this landholder, who displayed so little moral sense on this occasion, was of great assistance to me afterwards. At the time of the Mohurrum festival, in the following year, there was considerable excitement between the rival sects of the Shiahs and Sunnis.

Nearly all Bengal Mohammedans are Sunnis; the Shiah religion being in vogue in Persia. The feeling on the occasion of this festival may be described as analogous to that between the Orangemen and Catholics in the North of Ireland. The Shiahs were in a small minority in Dacca; and at this time they came to me in a body, and said that if I would not protect them, they must leave Dacca, and give up their business. They were all of Persian extraction and quite fair complexion, and very respectable people. They said they could not go about without being insulted, and occasionally assaulted.

Cases now began to appear in my Court in which both sides were complainants and defendants. I kept these all on my own file, and adjourned them from time to time, wishing to make the parties compromise. In one case, a Shiah was accused of threatening some Sunnis with a pistol. They had seized him, and the weapon was produced in court. He said that he had carried the pistol for defensive purposes, and that he had pointed it at the complainants, who had insulted him; but that, though it was loaded, it would not go off.

It was a curious old weapon, and I had it taken outside to be discharged; but the efforts of all my subordinates were not able to move the trigger, and finally I had to send it to a locksmith to be unscrewed. This was much in favour of the accused.

In the mean time I had frequent communication with the landholder, Munneer-ooddeen Khan, who had really no sectarian feeling, though he was obliged outwardly to act as a good Sunni. He showed an impartiality at this time, which was all the more praiseworthy as a scurrilous placard in Persian had been posted about the town, throwing doubt upon his legitimacy. This was supposed to have emanated from a Shiah source, though it may have been the work of some envious members of his own section. He kept me well-informed of the state of feeling, and I was able to make all the necessary arrangements in the best possible way.

I could have suppressed a riot easily, with the aid of the troops; but I wished to prevent anything like a disturbance. At length he told me that he thought he had managed to conciliate the principals on each side; and he proposed giving a grand banquet in his palace, to which he would invite the leaders of both parties. I had the pending cases brought on in my Court the day before this proposed feast, and informed the Sunnis, that if they threatened the Shiahs, I would surely punish them; and the Shiahs, that they must be conciliatory in their demeanour, as I should only protect them against unprovoked annoyance. And I further told the parties in the cases, that if they did not compromise, I should treat them all

as defendants, and prosecute them, on behalf of Government, for creating disturbances.

This, coupled with the prospect of a feast, inclined all parties to settle their differences; and before I left Court that day, all the cases were compromised. But had it not been for Munneer-ooddeen, I should have had much greater trouble.

CHAPTER IV.

AT DACCA.

THE MUNICIPALITY.—A CASE OF JEALOUSY.—AN IMPERTINENT CROW.—TROUBLESOME GAOLERS.—LUNATIC ASYLUM.—GANJAH.—COLD WEATHER TOUR.—INCONVENIENCE CAUSED IN OFFICE WORK.—BOATS.—INSPECTION OF A POLICE STATION.—A KHAIR-KHAH.—A MOHAMMEDAN SUB-DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATE.—A NATIVE NOBLEMAN'S HOSPITALITY.—SOME CURIOUS CASES ARISING OUT OF DISPUTES ABOUT LAND.—PIG-STICKING AT TOONGEE.—BOAR KILLED BY A TIGER.—EXCURSION TO TIPPERAH.—DEATHS AT DACCA.

As Magistrate of the District, I was *ex officio* Chairman of the Municipality of Dacca. This was no light responsibility, and gave me a great deal of anxiety and trouble. The law, Act III. of 1864, had been in force for some three years, and the body of Municipal Commissioners had been appointed under it. The law necessitated this, and also a system of management and collection, which was out of all proportion to the income at our disposal.

The total amount of our collections was approximately 60,000 rs. annually. According to law, our "tehsildars," or collectors, had to serve a notice each quarter for the amount due. If it were not then paid, they had to apply at the office for a warrant of distraint. This could not be executed for a certain number of days; and then, after

distraint, notice of sale had to issue. The tax was assessable on the rents of houses, and had been fixed by the Commissioners, as a matter of course, at the maximum rate of seven and a half per cent. There was also a wheel tax.

My experience is, that a house tax is altogether unsuitable for Indian provincial towns. There are very few buildings worthy the name of houses; and those that are constructed of masonry are for the most part small, and rented at very low rates. It was the same at Durbhungah.

The state of Dacca was bad. There was no proper drainage, no sort of provision for the removal of sewage, the roads were out of repair, and the place teemed with fetid pools, formed by excavations for the purpose of building mud houses. The law gave us power to prohibit new holes being dug; but it did not enable us to compel owners to fill up those already existing. Indeed, as in all laws made by Englishmen, the consideration for vested rights was more than ample.

We had to expend more than a sixth part of our income in paying the municipal police (it was a constant struggle to keep down Peel's demands); and the expenses of collection were very heavy, leaving us only about 42,000 rs. (£4,200) to spend on conservancy and improvements of every sort.

With reference to expenses of collection, I may mention that I made a calculation that there were over 9,000 tax-payers, whose tax payments for the year amounted to less than 1 rupee (2*s.*) each. Supposing that all these paid up promptly on the first visit of the

tehsildar, there would be 36,000 visits necessary for the collection of 8,000 rs., or less, equal to £800. There were, probably, at least 72,000 visits to get in this amount. The law gave us no power to let off anybody on the score of poverty, as we could under the old Act, or it would have been a positive gain to cut off a good proportion of these.

The rate fell with altogether disproportionate severity on the European residents, who lived in highly-rented houses, and kept vehicles for purposes of locomotion.

We got a small addition to our income from fines for breaches of provisions of the law; but, for the imposition of these, a regular case had to be got up; and when the cases were ready, there was very often no municipal commissioner present to try them. This was very annoying to poor people who had been summoned from their work as accused or witnesses, and I did my best to prevent it; but I had no power over the Commissioners, except moral influence, and this in Dacca did not prevail in making them regular in their attendance.

In fact, it was much less trouble to the people to do as I used to at Durbhungah, viz., spy out an offence in my morning's ride, and order the culprit to pay a fine of 6*d.* or 1*s.* on the spot. The people cursed the new law, and I do not wonder at it. They said, "We are bullied by the tax-gatherer, we are summoned to Court, and worried and fined for letting things go on as our ancestors have done for hundreds or thousands of years, and no good comes of it. People die just as they did before, our houses are not any better."

There was only too much truth in this. The Europeans used to grumble just as much, while the natives said that all the money was spent on the quarter of the town inhabited by them. The Judge's wife would meet me on the polo ground. "Well, Mr. Gordon, the springs of my carriage were nearly broken coming down here this evening; when *are* you going to get the road repaired?" The Doctor would write a note: "Dear Gordon, the road down to the Mitford Hospital is in a shameful state, and I have a good mind to come down on the Municipality for the expense of the necessary repairs to my buggy," etc., etc. But if I spent all our available assets on keeping the metalled roads in repair, what was to become of all the other things necessary to be done?

The *Dacca News* was loud in its condemnation of the apathy of the Municipality, and very specially of their Chairman. It seemed to me that, beyond keeping gutters clean and very incomplete annual repairs to roads, we had funds for nothing; and that any general scheme of improvement would necessitate the expenditure of a sum which would not come within the dreams of the wildest enthusiasts. However, I thought I would make an effort, so I prepared a paper, which I read at a full meeting of the Commissioners.

I first of all touched on their apathy, and that of the residents of Dacca in general, with reference to the state of their town. I pointed out that it was accused of being one of the places where cholera was endemic, and whence it was propagated, and told them that the air they breathed, as well as the water which they drank, and in which they

bathed and washed their clothes, was polluted with sewage; only I put this in very forcible language. I then said, that to do any real good we must have money. That our present income was almost useless, but that if we doubled our tax we could borrow a good sum on the security of half our annual income, say 1,000,000 rs. With this we could carry out a scheme of reproductive improvement which would end finally with stamping out cholera, and putting Dacca into a proper sanitary state.

There was a good deal of discussion about this, and it was specially hard on the people who lived in decent houses; but at last it was carried unanimously, a *proviso* being added that the law should also be altered, so as to allow the total exemption of all tax-payers whose tax was less than 4 annas, equal 6*d*.

The editor of the *Dacca News* was present on behalf of the press, and had several copies of my paper printed and circulated. For the first time, he approved of me in a leading article. The proceedings had to go up, through Saunders, to Government, for approval and the necessary alterations in the law. Saunders was dead against doubling the tax, and said the whole thing was chimerical. I begged him to let it go up to Government, and not throw cold water on it, as the Dacca people would take their cue from him; and I argued that it would show Government that we at any rate were willing to make an effort to improve the state of things if allowed, and it would make them do something for us. Finally, the proceedings did go up; and Government disallowed the double tax, but

stated that special consideration would be given to the case of Dacca.

The Lieut.-Governor expressed himself pleased at the vigour of my minute, and also wished to know if I would like to deprive any of the Municipal Commissioners of their seats, on the ground of apathy and inattention to duty. I replied that I should find it difficult to get better men in their place, and that, where so much of our hope of doing anything lay in the exercise of moral influence, it was better to retain inert friends than make active enemies. So nothing further was said on that head, neither was any extra assistance given to Dacca while I was there; but after I left there was special legislation, and, I believe, the town is now in a fair way to get a proper water supply, the chief portion of the expenditure however being contributed by Munneer-ooddeen.

In Bengal, however, except in the very large towns, such as Calcutta, I am of opinion that our municipal legislation has been inefficient and worrying, chiefly because there are never sufficient funds to make the alterations necessary to do any real good in these towns, built ages ago without any consideration of sanitary arrangements.

In Dacca the wells inside the inclosures of the native houses were strongly polluted with sewage, and, in the case of Mohammedans, with decomposing corpses. For they were in the habit of burying their dead under the floors of their houses, especially their women. We got a piece of land and opened a new burial ground for them, but found it exceedingly difficult to prevent their adhering to their former practices, and had to be very severe with them.

My mornings were generally occupied in riding about the town, inspecting municipal works, or paying visits to the Mitford Hospital, Lunatic Asylum, or Gaol. On one occasion, as I was passing the principal police station, I saw a crowd gathered round, and went in to ascertain the cause.

There I found a beautiful Cashmêri woman lying on the floor with her robe almost off, and positively weltering in blood. The Sub-Inspector was seated by her, pen and paper in hand.

"What are you doing?" I said.

"I am recording her deposition," he replied.

"But she will die of loss of blood," I said. "Get a cloth, and bandage her face," for I could see at a glance that her nose had been cut off, and indeed a part of her upper lip. "Get a carriage at once, and send her to the hospital."

Hearing this, the woman said, "Oh, shall I live, shall I escape?"

"You will," I said; "but you must keep quiet."

"My aunt will tell you all," she said.

I then perceived an oldish woman, who said she was her aunt; that her niece's husband was jealous of her, and had that morning, half-an-hour previously, cut off her nose in a fit of passion, and then run away.

"Can you find the nose?" I said; "if so, take a carriage, look for it, and bring it as quickly as you can to the hospital."

She said she thought she could, as she knew where it had fallen.

I went myself with the wounded woman to the Mitford

Hospital, and commended her to the special care of the native Sub-assistant Surgeon, as the Civil Surgeon was absent inspecting some outlying dispensaries in the interior. While there, the aunt brought the nose, and the Sub-assistant Surgeon, seeing it, said it could certainly be fitted on to the face.

I went away, as I had plenty to do; but in the evening I called again at the hospital, to inquire after the success of the operation; for, over and above any curiosity in the matter, I felt that, if successful, it would have some weight in overcoming the native prejudices against surgery after the European fashion.

The Sub-assistant Surgeon came out to me with rather a blank face. "A calamity has happened," he said. "The mehtur (servant who does the dirty work) was instructed to wash the nose in a basin of clean water; he left it in the basin for a moment, and while his back was turned a crow came in and flew off with it."

This was somewhat ludicrous; but I was exceedingly annoyed, for the matter could not be repaired. The impudence of Indian crows is so well known, that I have not said anything on this subject before.

Saunders had lost the top of his thumb in an analogous way some two or three years before. He and a friend had wounded a boar which stood at bay under a tree, the branches of which came down so low that they could not ride up to it, and Saunders dismounted to give him the *coup de grace*. The boar rushed at him, knocked him down, and bit off the top of his thumb, which he dropped on the ground. His friend, coming up, managed to spear the boar,

and sent in to a neighbouring village for a palanquin to carry Saunders, who was much knocked about, to his tent. He picked up the fragment of thumb, placed it on the top of the palanquin when it arrived, and turned to assist Saunders, when a watchful crow swooped down and carried it off.

In the nose case I issued warrants for the arrest of the brutal husband, and offered £20 reward for his apprehension. The woman, who was of strong constitution, got well in about a month; but had to walk about veiled, after the manner of Egyptian women. I heard that her husband had had good cause for jealousy.

About two months after, a man was apprehended in the Backergunge district, about a week's journey off by boat, and was sent to me for trial on this charge. On the day appointed, my court was crowded; and the veiled woman appeared as prosecutrix. But when I called upon her to identify the prisoner, it was not the man. I suspected collusion at first; but on due inquiry found that really the wrong man had been apprehended; and I may add that the right one was never caught. This prisoner was of course at once discharged, and was so rejoiced at regaining his liberty that he never thought of making any claim for false arrest. In England such a case would have been more troublesome to the police authorities.

And now the gaol began to give me trouble. The Armenian in charge at the time of my arrival had been dismissed, in accordance with arrangements previously made, and an European called Starkey had been appointed. The salary was 100 rs. (£10) a month, and in addition, 5 per

cent. commission was allowed to the gaoler on the profits of gaol manufactures sold and paid for.

It is very exceptional to get an European fit for such a post on such a salary, and things work much more *smoothly* with a judiciously selected native, for it is possible to get a native of a much better class relatively for the same pay. Starkey, I believe, meant well; but he was not equal to keeping the gaol accounts, which are very complicated; and they were sent back every month from the Inspector-General's office for revision. Then again, he was rude to the Doctor, and I had to reprimand him for this. Finally, several accusations were made against him of demanding and receiving bribes in consideration of treating certain prisoners leniently. I went carefully into all these cases, which occupied a great deal of my time, and found they were all without doubt false; but yet I could not get sufficient proof to indict any of the accusing parties for perjury. Starkey was not acute enough to help me.

He came out of the inquiry triumphantly, however, and soon after gave a supper party to some friends in the town. His rooms were over the gateway before mentioned, and at a height of some twenty feet from the ground. Among his guests was the former gaoler, Lucas,—who still lived in the town, and against whom I had warned him, as I knew he would do all in his power to injure him,—and two other low Armenians of the town. About 2 a.m. I received information that a man had been murdered at the gaol; so I got up hastily and rode down.

It appeared, from what I could ascertain on the spot, that Starkey and his wife, with their three guests, had con-

sumed about five dozen bottles of beer, and that some quarrel had arisen, and Starkey had thrown Lucas out of window. Lucas, I found, had both legs and both arms broken, and was supposed to be in a dying state. He was taken off to the Mitford Hospital, where his supposed, dying deposition was recorded, and he solemnly stated that Starkey had pushed him out.

I entered a mem. in the Gaol Minute Book, stating the facts, adding that they seemed to be all drunk together, and suspending Starkey from his duties. The police took up the inquiry at my orders, and I made the case over to Lang. Starkey was a terrible nuisance until the case was finished. First he sent me a petition stating that he was much aggrieved by my having implied in my mem. that his wife was drunk. I declined to alter anything I had said. Then, every day that the case was pending before Lang, he would come in with a petition that I would transfer the case to my own file, as Lang was not impartial. He was finally committed to the Sessions for trial, and acquitted, as it seemed doubtful whether Lucas had not fallen backwards out of the window, his (supposed) dying deposition to the contrary notwithstanding. He got well; but poor Starkey went raving mad about a couple of months afterwards, and was sent to a lunatic asylum in Calcutta.

He was succeeded by another European, Dunstan, who was highly recommended by Mowbray, the Inspector-General of Gaols. He appeared to be a gentleman both by birth and education, and I was surprised that such a man should accept such a post. Everything went very smoothly after his arrival. He kept the gaol beautifully clean, the

prisoners well under control, and the accounts were never returned for revision. But he was an enterprising man, and in that way began to give trouble. As he got a percentage on the profits from gaol manufactures, he was naturally anxious to extend these.

He proposed first of all to supply all the Christians in the town with meat, and persuaded me, though with much hesitation, to make over to him the flock of sheep belonging to our Mutton Club, of which I was manager. This saved me some trouble at the time; but soon complaints reached me from all former members, of the bad quality of the mutton they now received, and for a long time I was the subject of much abuse.

Then he wished to introduce the manufacture of soda water and to buy a soda-water machine. There was of course no provision for this in the gaol budget, and he proposed to spend for the purpose money that had been sanctioned for the erection of a new work-shed. This I positively declined to allow; but shortly afterwards Mowbray came to Dacca on a tour of inspection, and Dunstan propounded his scheme to him. Mowbray was most affable always when present; and certainly, to the best of my belief, he said that he did not object to *the soda-water machine being entered as a work-shed*, and that he would have the matter made right in his office.

The machine was therefore bought, and did not turn out profitable. Mowbray declined to pass the thing in the accounts; it was a question, I think, of about £150, a very serious item in a Bengal gaol budget, and a correspondence on the subject commenced, which had not come to an end

when circumstances called me hurriedly away from Dacca, about a year afterwards. In fact, Dunstan in these ways gave me a lot of trouble.

Another thing which occupied time was the Lunatic Asylum. It was situate next to the gaol, in the centre of the town; and just at the time of my arrival sanction had been obtained from Government for the purchase of a piece of ground for the enlargement of its garden. This site was covered with houses, and I had to carry through the process of expropriation, no light matter, and much more difficult than the case I have already described at Durbhungah. This I did as "Collector."

I was also, *ex officio*, a visitor of the Asylum, and had to attend the fortnightly meetings for inspection and consideration of the cases of lunatics recommended for discharge. These were of two classes, criminal and non-criminal. The discharge of the non-criminal lunatics as cured was a pleasant duty enough; but with the criminals it was a sad fact that some 70 per cent. had become insane through smoking ganjah.

Ganjah is the dried hemp plant, which has flowered, but from which the resin has not been extracted. When smoked, this produces strong brain excitement, generally accompanied with homicidal mania. The large percentage of lunatics above mentioned had been found to have committed murder or attempt to murder; but had been acquitted on the ground of insanity, and were therefore detained in custody during the pleasure of Government. Most of these cases got well in three months or so, when the effects of the ganjah had been got rid of; and as we

did not wish to keep these people in idleness, and had no power to make them labour, it became necessary to recommend their discharge. Sometimes the same man would be on trial three times, and acquitted on the ground of insanity caused by this drug.

It seemed to me that the law required alteration, or that insanity caused by ganjah should be treated as intoxication, and a man under its influence should be held responsible; and in this the Civil Surgeon agreed with me. But nothing was done in the matter as long as I remained in India.

It is not possible to prohibit the cultivation of so useful a plant as hemp; but Government has endeavoured to keep under control the preparation and sale of the dried plant as a stimulant. Cultivators have to get a licence to retain in their possession the crop when cut and gathered, and can only sell to licensed warehousemen, who have to pay a duty of about 2*s.* a pound on all sold by them. It would be a great benefit if its use as a stimulant or narcotic could be abolished; but it would be impossible to prevent its preparation in small quantities, as hemp grows wild in so many places, and it is therefore better to recognise and control it. As it is, Government derives a large income from this; but the consumption is very large, as I know from the returns that I had to supervise.

About the latter half of November the rains began to dry up, and it was necessary for me to begin preparations for my cold weather tour through the district. Officers are not expected to be absent from head-quarters for three months continuously. Indeed, it would not be possible to

do this and carry on the mass of office work efficiently. In fact, it is very difficult to be absent for the whole three months prescribed by the Board of Revenue at all; and every day that I could count towards this, I looked upon as precious.

Of course I could take as many of my subordinate staff with me as I chose, and make my peripatetic Court as numerous as I pleased; but I found in practice that the larger number I took with me, the more the ordinary course of business was interfered with, and the greater the infliction to the villagers in whose vicinity I encamped.

I was allowed to leave the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector in charge of the *current* duties of my office, but it was difficult to draw a definite line between current and non-current; *e.g.*, in all suits brought by or against Government, the Collector of the District in which the suit is brought is either plaintiff or defendant. Summonses in such cases are served on an official, called the "Government Pleader" (generally, by the way, a very inefficient person), who sends notice to the Collector, with a copy of the plaint. The Collector then takes into consideration whether he will compromise or defend the suit, and in either case sends the papers with his opinion to the Commissioner for orders, who forwards them to the Legal Remembrancer, a Calcutta official, who is supposed to watch over all Government litigation. This latter returns the papers with such remarks as he thinks fit, and the case is conducted in accordance therewith.

Many of these cases are easy, and go through all this circumlocution arrangement in a machine-like way; but some

are very difficult and intricate, and require considerable thought and care. If the Collector decides to defend a case, he orders the Government Pleader to draw up the draft of the reply. The Government Pleader does this on the basis of facts supplied by the Sherishtadar, who searches the Government records for them. The draft is usually in the vernacular, and a translation of this is made by one of the Collector's English-speaking clerks, as,—until quite lately at least,—the Sherishtadars did not know English. The Sherishtadar then places the papers before the Collector.

During the first of my absences from head-quarters, Lang being in charge of the current duties of my office, the Sherishtadar placed before him the draft reply in an important case, which Lang signed and allowed to be forwarded to the Commissioner. The reply was all wrong; and Saunders, exceedingly angry at such a case being so carelessly treated, wigged me officially for allowing Lang to deal with it. I was obliged to reply in self-defence, that it had been done without my knowledge, in my absence, whereupon Saunders insisted on the Sherishtadar being fined for neglecting to send it out to me in camp. The Sherishtadar said he thought it was "a current duty," and so perhaps an ordinary unimportant case might have been. I could not accept his excuse, and was obliged to obey the Commissioner's orders.

In Eastern Bengal generally the mode of locomotion is by boat; and though I did a certain amount of tenting in the Dacca district, most of my touring was by water. In this way you travel veritably like a snail, with your house on your back. There are two or three kinds of boats,

called "boats," "budgerows," and "kos boats" respectively. They all contain a sitting-room cabin, a bedroom, and a little place at the stern for bathing purposes. The two first descriptions are roomy, with flat planked roofs, on which it is possible to sit with comfort, but slow and unwieldy. Indeed, they cannot be rowed even down stream against a wind, and their progress is only by sailing or towing.

The "kos" are smaller and narrower, with curved thatched roofs; not nearly so comfortable, but much more speedy. If I had a long distance to go, I generally used the latter; but if my tour required frequent stoppages at short intervals, I would take the former, and get my wife and child to accompany me.

The rate of hire of these boats is from 5 rs. to 6 rs. a day. The kos boats, being longer, allow more room for oarsmen; and as they are taken principally for speed, more oarsmen are used in them, and this makes them generally more expensive than the larger boats. But as an official on tour is allowed 5 rs. (10*s.*) a day, or 8 an. (1*s.*) a mile, for travelling expenses, we found it more profitable to take the more expensive but the more speedy boats.

The number of hours that the Bengal boatmen can continue to row without rest is extraordinary. They sleep on the deck, and cook their meals in a little hole forward. The crews are either all Mohammedans or Hindus of one caste, so that one man can do the cooking for the whole. It was very pleasant in fine weather to sail along before a fair breeze, or to lie awake at night and listen to the plash of the oars as we glided down with the stream. Against

the current the oars could make very little progress indeed. The rivers were generally crowded with boats of all sorts, and the scene was seldom dull.

The district officer, too, is always supposed to keep his eyes open, and to note as he goes along the nature of the crops, possibility of new roads or canals, condition of the people, sanitary state of the villages, etc., in addition to all the points of which he has to make an official inspection.

Our own cooking was done either on the roof at the stern of the boat, where the native servants worked miracles behind a cloth stretched across on a pole, or else we had a small separate boat as a cook boat. This latter plan was more suited to fastidious tastes; but in case of a breeze, or a too fascinating bazaar on the river bank, the boats occasionally got separated, and then the master had a good chance of starvation until reunion was effected. I have suffered very great inconvenience from this sort of mishap; but, as a rule, native servants behave wonderfully well on these expeditions.

I started on my first trip on a beautiful moonlight night from Dacca, to go north-westwards, to inspect the subdivision of Manickgunge. There was a gentle fair wind coming from the south-east. I got into my boat just opposite Saunders' house; and as I glided up stream past the embankment, the numerous mosques and temples, and finally the old Lal Bagh (the unfinished palace of Shaishta Khan, containing the beautiful mausoleum of his daughter, Bibi Pire, who married Sultan Azim, third son of Aurungzebe), the scene was one on which many travellers would have descanted with rapture. But few travellers

come to Eastern Bengal, and officials are apt to have too much familiarity with such scenes forced upon them.

In the morning I found myself anchored at the police station of Shabhar, my first point of inspection. I had emerged from the Borigunga river into the Dullasery, and Shabhar stands at a point where the river turns at less than a right angle to the north. It is a commanding situation, and the thannah buildings are overshadowed by a magnificent tamarind-tree.

As I landed, the head police officer (sub-inspector), with several subordinates, came out to meet me; and his first request was that I would order this tree to be cut down —a most unusual petition from natives, who are generally anxious to preserve trees; but he said, and several natives who had come round, confirmed him, that tamarind-trees generated fever. I was loth to sacrifice such a fine tree, and asked for definite proof of this assertion. This was not forthcoming; and I said I would consider the matter. I asked the Civil Surgeon, on my return, if he knew of any evil properties of this species of tree; and as he said No, I declined to have it interfered with. It is standing, I believe, to this day; a landmark for many miles around.

The inspection of a police station occupies some little time, as there are so many registers to examine; and by looking carefully into them, very valuable information about the working of the police in each locality can be obtained. The chief registers kept may be enumerated as follows:—

1. Register of A forms; *i.e.*, cases found to be true, in which prisoners have been apprehended and sent up for trial.

2. Register of B forms; cases considered "not proven," or false.
3. Register of C forms; cases considered true, but no person apprehended.
4. Register of bad characters.
5. Register of released convicts living in the neighbourhood.
6. Register of absconded criminals.
7. Register of property stolen, and amount recovered.
8. Register of unrealized fines.
9. Register of summonses issued by Magistrate.
10. Register of warrants issued by Magistrate.
11. Register of unclaimed property.
12. Register of intestate property.
13. Register of village watchmen.

And besides these, there is a station diary, which has to be written up day by day. Copies of the first three registers are sent to the Subdivisional Magistrates having jurisdiction; and they pass final orders as to the form in which they are to be entered; for instance, occasionally altering B into C, or ordering B to be changed into A, and the accused sent up for trial.

Complainants whose cases are sent in by the police in B form, frequently rush into court and make a complaint before the Magistrate, not stating that they have already been to the police station, before the B form can arrive; but this, as a rule, does them very little good. They complain freely, if dissatisfied with the manner in which the police have conducted the inquiry, and this shows that at any rate they are not altogether afraid of them.

The register of bad characters shows the surveillance exercised by the police over the criminal classes living in their circle. It is most important that this should be properly kept, and that the entries should not be mere shams; on the other hand, if misused, it is a terrible instrument of oppression.

A police officer can say to a villager against whom he may have any cause of enmity, "I will have your name put in the register of bad characters;" and this means constant house-searching if any theft or burglary occurs in the neighbourhood, and in fact ceaseless bullying.

The police, I fear, must be admitted to be oppressors; but they are of the people and from the people, and we cannot get better material. They are more under control than formerly, and are certainly improved. But it will take a long time yet to eradicate the idea from the native mind, that official power is to be used primarily for the benefit of the possessor.

The register of unrealized fines points to a state of things that I consider might be altered with advantage. Under the Penal Code, imprisonment undergone in default of payment of fine, is not considered as a substitute for payment, but a punishment for non-payment; and a fine is realizable at any time within six years from the date of the sentence. The natives think this very hard, and it is easy to see that in cases of poor convicts this rule is very oppressive. I would allow the imprisonment to be taken as a substitute for payment, as it used to be before the introduction of the Penal Code.

After going through the registers and ascertaining how

many of the constables could read and write, I inspected the pound, the school, and the village generally. I was of course followed by "a well-wisher" of the Government ("khairkhah"), who had made a list of the number of houses in Shabhar, and calculated the amount of municipal tax that might be raised upon them, showing, after payment of all necessary expenses, a considerable "*profit*" to Government, as he called it. He finished by saying, that should the town be brought under the Municipal Act XX. of 1856, he should hope to be appointed tax-collector. This of course was the meaning of his taking all this trouble. His arguments did not convince me, for I considered that the introduction of the Act would only worry the people, and that from the want of funds no good would ensue. Any cases of real nuisance the Magistrate could deal with under the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes.

In the afternoon I started for Manikgunge. The sudden turn in the river made the wind adverse; so the process of towing commenced, and my progress was not nearly so agreeable as before.

I reached the subdivisional head-quarters at daylight the next morning. Miserable buildings, with mud walls and thatched roofs, of which the lock-up (subdivisional gaol) was also constructed, situated on the bank of a "khal," or artificial cutting, which made a short route from one bend of the Dullasery to another.

I had not informed the Mohammedan Deputy Magistrate of my intended visit, and I found him absent, "moving about in his interior," as he afterwards informed me in an English (?) letter; for subdivisional officers are expected

to make their cold weather tours through the area within their jurisdiction. This did not prevent my inspecting everything in his absence.

I had noticed that his criminal statements, showing the number of witnesses examined on the first day of appearance, were very "good," and that very few,—indeed, *suspiciously* few,—witnesses had been detained until the second day. Recollecting the ideas of my sherishtadar at Durbhungah, I was anxious to inquire into this.

On calling for the records of a few criminal cases, I found that warrants had been issued in a large proportion of them for witnesses who had neglected to appear in answer to the summons first served upon them.

As I was walking down to my boat to my dinner, I met a villager in the company of a constable, who shouted "Duhai. Justice, my lord; I have been arrested by warrant, though I came in obedience to a summons."

I had the record of his case examined the next day; and pushing the inquiries still further, I at last elicited from the police inspector, who had been afraid to speak at first, that it was the constant practice of the Deputy Magistrate to ignore the presence of witnesses who had appeared in answer to summons because he had not the time or the inclination to record their evidence on the appointed day, and to issue warrants for their apprehension as being absent, only to save the appearance of his returns.

After this I went round to the three police stations in his subdivision; and on examining the registers of *summonses* and *warrants*, found that the latter far exceeded the for-

mer in number for the past six months. This was most exceptional, and I came to the conclusion that what the police inspector had stated was substantially true.

I reported the matter to Saunders, who, in talking it over to me, said, "There must be some good in the man, as Berkeley thought so highly of him." Saunders had almost too great a respect for the opinion of his predecessor. The Deputy Magistrate, however, could not give any satisfactory explanation of the facts I had elicited; but, owing to a very lenient report sent up to Government by Saunders, he was merely deprived of the independent charge of the subdivision, and called in to do work at head-quarters. In my opinion, he got off far too easily.

On my return to the station, I remained there a few days at the commencement of the month, until the despatch of the almost innumerable monthly returns; and then started for the northern and higher part of the district. On this occasion I was enabled to utilize one of the two roads of which we could boast, and which ran through the jungle to the north of the town on the way to Mymensingh.

My destination was Bhowal, where lived an enlightened Hindu landholder, called Kali Narain Rai, who was anxious to be on good terms with the official and all other Europeans of respectability. A large portion of his estate was situated in the forest jungle; but he resided on some clear land at the south-eastern edge of it, where he had his old ancestral residence, family temple, etc., etc.

He had also, with true Oriental hospitality, added to his house a building in the European style, for the use

of Europeans; and in this my wife and child, whom I had taken with me, and myself were located. He did not appear at first, as he said he would pay his respects to us after we had bathed and breakfasted. The walls of his drawing-room were covered with some ten engravings of English pictures, and I was amused to observe that they were all duplicates. There were two of "The Monarch of the Glen," two of "Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time," two of "The Meeting of Blucher and Wellington after Waterloo," etc., etc. I suppose he must have procured them through some native agent in Calcutta.

In due time he came in, and, after some conversation, took my wife to see his wives, into whose presence I, of course, was not permitted to go. She told me there were three of them, of very different ages, and all exceedingly pretty. He had had children by each, and explained to her which belonged to which. All this she thought rather curious.

As I have observed before, we English in India are accused of keeping aloof from native society; but the blame does not rest with us. It is attributable to caste prejudices, and the seclusion of women. Here was this man, most anxious to be civil and hospitable; but his religion forbad him to let me see his wives or daughters, and himself to eat or drink with me. Probably, also, he underwent a purification after each interview, for he was a high Brahmin. However, as I stayed some days here, and had about two interviews with him daily, we gradually became very confidential.

One day I went to his cutcherry, where he was sup-

posed to settle rent disputes, leases, etc.; but where also, no doubt, he dispensed justice in many matters with a good deal more arbitrary power than I could assume. We find it impossible to prevent landholders assuming magisterial powers in cases arising among their own tenants; and they fine them freely for their own benefit. This, of course, is wrong; but I believe that in general substantial justice is done, and in petty matters suitors are saved the trouble and inconvenience of coming to a distant Court. Occasionally, pressure is put on tenants to prevent their going to the legitimate Courts; and this we do our best to put a stop to if we find it out.

Of course nothing of this sort was done during my presence at the cutcherry; but while I was there, a villager came up with a little baby in his arms, to show to Kali Narain. The poor little thing had been born without arms or legs. We expressed our opinion as to its being a curiosity.

"It is a great misfortune," said the father. "It is a girl; it will not be married, for I cannot afford a dowry; and it will not be able to work, and get its own living." And he went on grumbling.

"Perhaps you would like to kill it?" interrupted Kali Narain.

A broad grin came over the parent's countenance.

"If your Highness's opinion be favourable, that was my intention," he replied.

And no doubt that was the order he most wished for; and had Kali Narain given it, the child would have been killed, and no official, except the village chowkeydar,

would have heard of it. But Kali Narain told him that I was the Hakim; he must take care of the child, and he would help to support it. If any harm happened to it, he would be punished. The man went away a good deal crest-fallen.

We walked back to the house, and I took the opportunity of telling my host how pleased I was to see that he had no cases in any of the criminal courts. He said,—

"No, not now; when I was young and hot-blooded, I used to fight, and have these cases; but it was anxious and undignified work. I had *to catch hold of the feet* of inferior and low caste men, police officials, and others. Now I am old, and I go to the civil court. Besides, I am no longer at enmity with Davis Sahib."

Mr. Davis was the largest European landholder in this part of Bengal. He had come into the neighbourhood a poor man; but had gradually managed to acquire a very large area of land. He had been constantly in the criminal and civil courts, and had many a battle with Kali Narain, having assisted some of his quarrelsome shareholders against him. Kali Narain had at last managed to get a batwarrah of his own share, that is, to get it separated from the estate held in joint tenancy in common; and so Davis could no longer annoy him through them. He continued,—

"Davis Sahib was a bad enemy to fight with, in the civil courts too. Once he had obtained illegal possession of some land of mine, and we had fought it in every possible way in the criminal court, and finally had recourse to the civil court. I was the plaintiff, and the case came

before the Sudder Ameen, who decided it against me. Now I knew that I was justly entitled to a decree. Davis Sahib had ousted me from possession by force; and I had tried to regain possession by force, but failed. However, in the civil court I felt sure there would be no doubt; and yet this decree was given against me.

"So I went into Dacca, and called on the Sudder Ameen (the subordinate Civil Judge). He sent out to say that he had a headache, and could not see me. I was young and hot-blooded at the time, and I stood in the court-yard, and shouted in a loud voice, 'Is the Sudder Ameen so ashamed of the unjust decree that he has given against Kali Narain, that he is afraid to see him?'

"The Sudder Ameen heard this, as I intended, and sent out, begging me to come in. So I went in, and he said,—

"'Abuse me, abuse all my female relations, and I will embrace your feet; but do not ruin me.'

"I replied, 'Why have you given this unjust decree, when you knew that the land was mine?'

"He said, 'The fact is, I am a poor man; and I have a small estate, which is surrounded on two sides by Davis Sahib's land. I dare not give a decree against him, as he would certainly somehow get my estate. But you can appeal to the Sudder Court in Calcutta. I have given my decree, but I have not written my *grounds of decision*; and I will so write these that my order must be upset on appeal.'

"As a fact," added Kali Narain, "it was so upset.

"Another time," he went on, "there was a great riot

here: just over there (pointing to a spot a few hundred yards distant). One of my shareholders was fighting with me, and Davis Sahib had taken up his side, and advanced him money on loan. They put up a cutcherry just there, in sight of my house, and I could not stand it. There was a great fight, and they do say that seven men were killed.

"I was not here, though of course the other side had many witnesses to swear that I was present on an elephant, directing the men on my side. Both parties made complaints to the police; and I was at first arrested as a principal, and actually kept in custody for two days.

"But I was released on bail; for on the day of the riot, I had taken care to be in Dacca, and had paid visits of ceremony to the Commissioner Sahib, the Collector Sahib, and the Judge Sahib, and they were all witnesses to my *alibi*.

"But I will open the whole of my heart to you. I once paid out Davis Sahib well.

"I was in Dacca, in my house there, when a man came in to inform me that one of my elephant-drivers had been standing up on the back of his elephant, to cut some branches of a fig-tree for him; that the elephant had moved on, and he had fallen on a heap of bricks lying below; had broken his leg, and bruised himself very severely.

"My Foujdari Mookhtyar (Criminal Court Attorney) was present, and heard this. 'Wait a little,' he said, 'and we will have a splendid case against Davis Sahib.'

"That evening, the wounded man was brought in to me, and he told the following story,—

"'Yesterday, I was coming in from Bhowal to Dacca, with 500 rs. in money for the expenses of the house in Dacca. When I got near Toongee, I met two of Davis Sahib's gomastahs (agents) and fifteen or sixteen men. They asked me where I was going.

"'I said, "To Dacca."'

"'What for?'

"'To take money for Baboo Kali Narain's expenses there.'

"'Then the gomastahs gave the order to seize me. I called out, "Duhai;" but they dragged me off my elephant, beat me, as you see, broke my leg, and plundered the money. There were two or three villagers near, who saw this; and my assistant driver, who ran away and escaped unhurt.'

"This complaint, which my mookhtyar had taught the man, was then brought in court, and so well supported that its truth could not be questioned. The medical evidence, also, was to the effect that the injuries might have been received in the manner described. The agents, and some ten other servants of Davis Sahib, were in custody on the charge. The then magistrate, Mr. Beauchamp (this was ten or twelve years ago), seemed to suspect something, for he himself went to Tongee to try and get independent evidence on the spot. But my mookhtyar had been beforehand with him; for he went there first, and instructed the neighbours what to say.

"Accordingly, when he arrived there, and made inquiries, they said, 'Yes, they had seen a man coming on an elephant on the day in question; and that a party of men

had met him and dragged him off his elephant. They did not recognise who they were, though they thought they were some of Davis Sahib's servants; and they had not taken any further trouble in the matter.'

"What more could the Hakim do? He was bewildered.

"While the case was yet pending, Davis Sahib came to pay me a visit. After salutations, he said, 'Kali Narain, I want to talk to you about this false case pending against my servants.'

"'What false case?' I said. 'You have no right to say any case of mine is false.'

"'Oh!' said Davis, 'you know it is false, and I have been to the gaol and talked to my servants, and I know quite well it is all false. How can you do such a thing? We worship the same God, though we call Him by a different name; and you must know that God will be very angry with you for this.'

"'God, doubtless, will be a little angry,' I said; 'but I must risk that, for I have got two of your agents and ten of your *employés* in prison, and it is too good a thing to let slip.'

"'You must compromise the case,' he said; 'and we will try and settle matters amicably. Here is a Bible. I kiss it now, and I promise not to take any advantage of you; but you must let me tell Beauchamp to send for you, and you will throw some light upon the case.'

"I was at length persuaded, and I sent for my mookhtyar, and told him I thought I would consent to compromise the case.

"'But,' said he, 'what is to become of Davis Sahib's false cases against us?'

"'I did not know there were any false cases,' said Davis; 'but my mookhtyar is outside. Call him in, and ask him.'

"We did so, and the man said, 'Yes; there are three small cases. Baboo Kali Narain has such a heavy case against us, that I was obliged to do something.'

"'Have them compromised at once,' said Davis.

"We then finally settled that he should ask Beauchamp to send for me; and he did so.

"'Kali Narain,' he said, 'you have something to tell me about this case."

"'Yes,' I said; 'I fear it is not based upon truth.'

"'Why did you let it go on so long then?'

"'Oh! I have only just found out the details.' I then told him the principal facts, and he allowed the case to be compromised. Davis Sahib and myself settled many matters without fighting after this."

The above narrative loses something, of course, by its translation from the original Bengali in which it was told; but it strikes me as very characteristic of the way in which contending parties are in the habit of conducting their litigation, and it is seldom one has an opportunity of getting behind the scenes in this way. I should not have been told all this if it had not occurred many years before. It seemed to me curious that this nobleman of ancient lineage, and thoroughly respectable, did not appear to see that there was anything dishonourable in allowing false cases of this sort to be got up in his favour. I may add, that under the

existing law, no compromise in such a case could have been allowed.

On our return from Bhowal to the Sudder station, we stopped at Toongee, which is just half-way to Dacca, and there we found Saunders and Lang, with two men from the regiment, who had come out for a Saturday's pig-sticking. I had ordered a tent and my horses to be sent there, so that we were able to join the party. It being the cold weather, we could stop out all day long; and at Toongee, by some curious coincidence, there were always two boars ready to give us a run.

On this occasion Saunders' elephants were present, and one of the officers, Bayley by name, was riding one of them so there were only three of us on horseback. My wife was a spectator from the steadiest elephant. We had had one gallop after a tolerable sized boar, and had started another which we had refrained from pursuing, as too small for our spears. We were watching him making his way across a rice field to a distant patch of jungle, when all of a sudden a tiger sprang up and, with a roar, gave the poor pig a blow with his paw on the side of the head. He then stood and looked at us, his tail lashing his sides. Bayley had a rifle. "Shoot," we all shouted. But to our surprise he was paralyzed with fear. "Take me on to the howdah elephant," was all he could say. No shot was fired; and the tiger trotted contemptuously away. On riding up to the pig, we found him dead, with one side of his head smashed in.

We got one more boar after this; but I had no share in either. After a pleasant evening in tents, we rode and drove merrily into Dacca the next morning. Bayley, who

had bragged a good deal of his sporting exploits, was much subdued.

We had many more of these Saturdays at Toongee; but as at Christmas time the courts were closed for a week, Saunders, Lang, Peel, the Banker, and myself planned an expedition further afield, across the great Megna to the district of Tipperah, where the pigs are famous and the patches of jungle surrounding the villages are long but narrow, so that with judicious riding a boar once started may be forced right through.

We sent our horses down to Naraingunge on the morning of Thursday, to go on before us in a country boat, while we were to follow in the afternoon in a comfortable budgerow. Our tents had gone ahead the previous day. The passage across to Doudkandee, on the Tipperah side, takes about five hours under favourable circumstances. About 2 p.m. we reached Naraingunge, and the first sight that caught our eyes at the place of embarkation, were three of our horses, standing in the water with their tails turned to the boat, into which the grooms had for some six hours been in vain trying to make them go.

Two of them belonged to Saunders, who had experience enough to expect something of this sort, but whose patience at once gave way, and who wished to give up the expedition and return. But before his outburst had ceased, Lang was up to his waist in the water; and his Anglo-Saxon energy in a very short time produced its usual marvellous effect, for in less than half an hour the three recalcitrant quadrupeds were on board, and the boats had started. We followed, and reached our tents

gleaming in the moonlight on the banks of the mighty river about 8 p.m.

The khabar, or news of pigs was good; and we rose early in eager anticipation of sport. Saunders, a glutton for sport, began by counselling moderation, saying we had better begin about 11, and leave off about 3. I accordingly took my gun, and in a very short time had bagged three brace of quail. As there had been a severe drought in the North-West, and the country about here was unusually dry, there was a good sprinkling of these birds about. However, on nearing the tents, I found Saunders had hurried on breakfast; and as a fact we were in the saddle and on our way to the cover side by 9.30. Saunders' elephants were there, and we had about two hundred beaters.

The first day we got five boars. The first three were small, the fourth was larger. We saw innumerable sows; but it would be as wicked to hunt these as it would to kill a vixen at home. It was exciting work, waiting at the side of the jungle for the rush out of our game; and I could feel my horse's heart beating as if it would burst the girths.

At length a rather larger boar made his appearance, with his white tusks gleaming in a most attractive yet menacing way. "Hold hard," said Saunders, "let him get well out." So we gave him about 150 yards' start, and then after him as hard as we could lay legs to the ground. We were riding through longish grass, and of course could not see any holes or other obstacles in our course. This is one thing which makes this sport dangerous. Both Lang and Peel came to grief. We three others pressed the animal

hard, but he managed to get to a narrow strip of jungle about half a mile off. "Separate," shouted Saunders. "I will try and crash through." So the Banker and myself went round each end of the strip and there waited. In a minute or so we saw our boar emerge, and close after him crashed out Saunders. It was now a race for first spear. Saunders was nearest to the boar, but his horse was running away with him; the animal doubled to the right, and he shot on. This let in McVittie (the Banker); and I saw him give a hasty prod with his spear, which I hoped had missed. My Arab had a lovely mouth, and I managed to get him sharp round as the boar doubled again to the right, shot in front of McVittie, and with a lucky thrust spined him. The poor beast died instantaneously.

"Good spear!" said Saunders, who had just managed to get round. "Your pig, Gordon. No, it isn't," he added; "there is a scratch on the rump; it is McVittie's." And so it was, for McVittie's prod had made a scratch sufficient to draw blood; and according to the rules of the sport the pig belonged to him. This was somewhat disappointing to me.

It was now 4.30; but Saunders' ideas of moderation had vanished, and he determined to draw one more cover. We did so for some time without success, and had given up the idea of further sport. Indeed, I had handed my spear to my groom, and had got a hundred yards from the cover in the direction of the tents when I heard a tremendous shouting behind me, and looking back saw the beaters and village spectators flying in all directions, while a very large boar was cantering off across a good open bit of country. I turned round, caught my spear from my syce as I passed

him at full gallop, and got a good start, as the others had dismounted or had mounted their ponies. I got up to the boar all alone, and tried to give him such a thrust as I had given the previous one; but, whether my spear was blunt or his hide unusually tough, I could not get it through his skin. Lang came up while I was thus bungling, and managed to send his spear in; and now the others came too, and between us we had at one time five spears broken into the animal's body. He stood at bay; and as it was dangerous to ride up to him with five jagged stumps projecting from him, we dismounted, and advancing shoulder to shoulder so despatched him. He was a brave animal, and died without a groan. It turned out that my first spear had given him a scratch sufficient to draw blood, so that this, the best boar of the meet, fell to me, though Lang had really stopped him. It was quite dark when we got to our tents.

The next day was a somewhat exciting one for me; our first boar was killed without much difficulty. The second was a fine fellow, with tremendous tusks. Saunders and I got well away with him; but he doubled so quickly that we both shot past him. I got round first, as Saunders' horse "Remand" was again pulling his arms off. I had just got over the boar, and my spear was descending, when Saunders rushed clean past me, knocking my spear on one side, fortunately without injury to himself, saying "I can't hold him," and disappeared in the distance. The boar had jinked again, and I now found Lang alongside me.

In front of us was a yawning nullah, and beyond it a narrow fringe of jungle. Lang's horse was overweighted,

and I really don't know how I negotiated the nullah; but I found myself the other side. I rode round the end of the jungle, and some peasants shouting showed me the direction the boar had taken; and he was evidently making for a piece of impenetrable jungle a good mile off. My horse was getting a bit blown; but I pressed him on, and in a short time could perceive the boar's black back bobbing up and down among the rice stubble.

As I neared him, I saw a cow tethered in front of him. The cow got frightened, and made a rush which tightened her rope; and the boar, crossing the line at the moment, got tripped up and thrown on his back. He was up in a second, and with that grunt "uh! uh!" denoting concentrated rage, charged the cow, knocked her clean off her legs, and then went on for the jungle.

This helped me; and when he was about twenty yards from his asylum I was only about the same distance behind him. I don't think I could have caught him; but his rage now got the better of him; he turned round, and with another "uh! uh!" charged me like a flash of lightning. My horse was courageous in company, but timid alone, and he was also quite blown. I jammed in my spurs, as the only safety in these cases is to meet the charge at full speed; but he stood stock still, and all I could do was to hold my spear as tight and straight as I could. The result was, that the spear was knocked aside like an ordinary stick, the boar made good his charge, and upset us. My horse bolted, and the boar went after him in his first impulse of rage, but came back to me almost immediately. I had presence of mind to lie perfectly

still, for these brave animals never attack dead things. I was at his mercy, for he could have sliced me up with his tusks, which I felt touch me as he sniffed round me. It was only for a second or two, though it seemed much longer, and then he walked slowly into the jungle.

I waited a minute or two, until I felt confident that he would not return, then got up and walked after my horse in the direction from whence I had come. I soon met McVittie, who had caught him and was somewhat anxious about me. We found the cow had received a slight gash only. Lang soon came up, much annoyed with me for letting the pig off,—though I really don't see how I could have helped it,—and soon after him Saunders, who had changed his horse.

He had had an escape from being killed, having been run away with through groves of trees and broken ground in a village. The horse was a fine chestnut Arab, but when he got excited he was quite impossible to hold. Saunders had bought him, when a Judge himself, from the Chief Justice of Bengal; and as many of his cases had been returned to him for revision by that functionary, he had christened him "Remand." After this he sent him to Calcutta for sale. The horse dropped down dead in the street on his way to the stables, and a *post mortem* examination showed that he was suffering from an abscess on the brain, which accounted for his terribly excitable nature. It was well that he had not killed Saunders.

That night we had a good deal of talk about pig-sticking. Saunders deplored the good old times, when we should certainly have got thirty boars instead of eight, and

much larger ones. In his enthusiasm he went so far as to say that shooting boars ought to be made penal; and he animadverted severely on the practice among the villagers here of keeping a shikarree and supplying him with powder and shot. Lang fully agreed with him; but this was after-dinner talk.

Pig-sticking has, certainly, grand sensations for the pig-sticker—the element of danger, no slight one, very much enhancing the pleasure of the sport; but it is a somewhat cruel way of killing an animal. The pigs themselves are a terrible pest; and a herd of these will root up whole crops in a night. If not well kept down, they get very ferocious, and frequently attack villagers without fear; and it is absurd to think that any restriction should be placed on their slaughter for the sake of the amusement of a few Europeans.

The next day, being Sunday, we employed in riding into Comilla, the head station of the Tipperah district, some thirty miles off. We had to swim our horses across a very broad river *en route*; and Peel was very nearly carried away by the stream. On the Monday we played a rather motley cricket match, and had a ball in the evening with about twenty men and six ladies. But our welcome was most hearty, and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We rode back to Doudkandee, about thirty-six miles, the next morning, and there took boat for Dacca by the way of Naraingunge, reaching home in the evening.

These breaks in the monotony of Mofussil life are most revivifying, and we came back full of health and spirits. But in our absence sad things had occurred. One of the

Judge's children had died of cholera; and on the night of the same day the eldest daughter of the Principal of the College had been burned to death, her light muslin dress having been caught by the flame of a candle. The Clergyman was away, affording spiritual aid to the neighbouring district of Mymensingh, and the bereaved fathers had to read the funeral service over each others' children. Truly these calamities press doubly hard in India.

CHAPTER V.

AT DACCA.

ANNUAL CRIMINAL RETURNS.—JUDICIAL OBSTRUCTIONS.—AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE.—STATISTICS.—SETTLEMENT WORK.—LAW OF ALLUVION.—REVENUE RETURNS.—INCOME TAX.—A BRAHMIN CONVERT.—REMITTANCES OF SILVER.—DACCA JUNGLE.—A SPORTING EXPEDITION IN THE RAINY SEASON.—BARUNI FAIR.—SUDDEN DEPARTURE FROM DACCA.—ACCUSED OF EXTORTION BY TELEGRAM.

AND now the time approached for the preparation of my annual Magisterial returns. These are supposed to embody all statistics connected with crime and criminal administration during the year, and are due one month after the close of the year. The figures, of course, are based on the monthly and quarterly returns previously submitted ; but their compilation is a work of considerable labour, and great is the anxiety until it be ascertained that the figures tally properly. The District Superintendent of Police prepared his returns independently, and it was necessary that his figures and those of my office should agree.

Then again, one set of my returns went up to the High Court, who commented on them from a judicial, and another to the Commissioner, and through him to the Bengal Government, who commented upon them from an

executive point of view. They were generally sent back from one or other of these offices for revision and correction; and we never got off without some explanations being called for. The High Court would generally observe that the District Magistrate had not tried enough cases himself. But I have remarked upon this point before. They would also calculate the proportion of convictions to acquittals in cases of commitment to the Sessions Courts by each Magisterial Officer, and also that of orders upheld and reversed in appealable cases, and mathematically deduce a favourable or unfavourable opinion from the calculation.

In fact, the connection of us executive officers with the High Court was generally the reverse of agreeable or interesting, and we were a good deal bothered by the ideas of the individual Judges who from time to time presided over the English Department, as it was called, which included the general supervision of the provincial courts.

E.g. In committing a man for trial for murder, we Magistrates had to draw up a charge in the following form :—

"I, A. B., Magistrate of Dacca, declare that there is hereby made against Z. the charge that he, on or about the eighth day of June, at Dacca, committed murder by causing the death of Y.; and that he has thereby committed an offence punishable under Sec. 302 of the Indian Penal Code, and within the cognizance of the Court of Session. And I hereby direct that he be tried by the said Court on the said charge."

This is the form given in the Code of Criminal Pro-

cedure ; but in the Indian Penal Code the section defining the crime of murder is followed by five exceptions, any one of which would render the crime less than murder ; as in cases of grave or sudden provocation, exercise of the right of self-defence, or act done in discharge of duty as public servant, or where the person killed is above eighteen years of age and suffers or takes the risk of the death at his own consent (case of a widow allowing herself to be burned on the funeral pile of her husband).

For about a year the Judge presiding over the English Department considered that in our charges we must expressly state the absence of these exceptions, and consequently, instead of the simple form above given, we had to frame them as follows :—

"I, A. B., Magistrate of Dacca, declare that there is hereby made against Z. the charge that he, on or about the eighth day of June, at Dacca, committed murder by causing the death of Y., the said Z. not having been deprived of the power of self-control by grave and sudden provocation, not having committed the act in the exercise of the right of private defence of his person or property, nor as a public servant, nor in aid of a public servant, nor in a sudden fight or quarrel, and the said Y. not suffering death with his own consent ; and that he has thereby committed an offence punishable under," etc., etc.

It is very difficult to translate such a form into Hindustani or Bengali, so as to make it intelligible to even an educated person ; to the ordinary villager it was utterly incomprehensible.

Saunders was a Judge at the time this order was in

force, and all Sessions' trials commence by reading over the charge to the prisoner, who is called upon to plead guilty or not guilty. After much experience, Saunders sent a remonstrance to the High Court, saying that charges framed in this form were unintelligible to most people, and that there was always one person who never could be got to understand them, viz., the unfortunate prisoner at the bar. He was wigged for want of respect; but shortly afterwards the obnoxious order was withdrawn, the form laid down in the Criminal Procedure Code was considered sufficient, and the absence of all exceptions was assumed, unless their presence was expressly stated.

Another case may illustrate how judicial technicalities interfered with the prompt administration of justice. Saunders, when a Magistrate, was out on a pig-sticking expedition, and was pursuing the boar into a village, where it had taken refuge among some huts. He was pulled up by a Hindu suppliant, who threw himself in front of his horse. "Justice," he cried; "Peer Baksh (a Mohammedan) has carried off my wife, and has got her in his house there, and says he will kill me if I try to go near her."

Saunders was putting a few questions to the man, when a scream was heard, the door of the house indicated was opened, and a beautiful Hindu woman ran out, followed by a tall Mohammedan. "That is my wife," said the suppliant, and rushed to her. The Mohammedan saw nothing in his rage but the obnoxious husband, and felled him to the ground with a club he had in his hand.

Saunders rode up and collared him, took him to his tent close by, tried him then and there, and gave him two

years' imprisonment, stating in his decision what he had himself seen.

The convict appealed to the Judge of the district, who reversed Saunders' order, on the ground that he ought not in his decision to have stated what he himself had *seen*; but that he should have sent the case before another Magistrate, and tendered himself as a witness; and he ordered this to be now done. The result was, that the case was compromised.

But this is a sort of thing that bewilders the natives. They say, "the Magistrate, in order to decide a case, wants to arrive at the truth. How can he get at the truth more surely than by seeing the facts with his own eyes? And yet when he does so see them, he is not allowed to decide the case."

But with regard to the returns, I may give a few figures for the year, to show that they were no very light matter. The total number of magisterial cases of all sorts, "decided on trial," amounted to 5,291; the total of persons convicted was 3,233, and acquitted or discharged, 3,089. But this does not represent nearly the whole amount of work; for there were instituted directly before the various Magistrates, without the intervention of the police, 5,672 cases.

These are nearly all of a petty nature, more than half false, and if not very carefully dealt with can be made the cause of great worry to a large proportion of the population, and of large profit to the swarm of needy legal practitioners who get them up and foster them in every possible way.

In these cases even the High Court departed from its judicial strictness, and issued general instructions to magisterial officers to test all complaints very carefully before granting summonses for the appearance of accused persons. We Magistrates were glad enough to go beyond the letter of their instructions in this respect; but, judicially speaking, I do not see how we could arrive at a correct decision as to the merits of a man's complaint without examining his witnesses and such proof as he might wish to offer. But if we sent for the witnesses before sending for the defendants, and, after hearing their evidence, considered there were grounds for issue of process, we should have to compel them to attend again in the presence of the defendants; and this would give us double work and the witnesses double trouble.

If, on the other hand, we summoned the defendants at once, the case would probably prove false, and our returns would look very bad with an enormous number of individuals summoned, and a very small proportion convicted. Native Deputy Magistrates, who always had an eye to the appearance of their returns, rather than anything else, had recourse to all sorts of dodges to make them look well.

Afterwards, when the subdivision of Baraset was under my control, and a native Deputy Magistrate in charge, rather a good officer than otherwise, I observed that his returns showed an exceptionally good proportion of convictions to acquittals, and I inquired into the reason. I found that his plan was, when a case of this sort was instituted, to send notice to the defendants that the case of the plaintiff would be heard on a certain day, and that, "*if*

they liked," they could be present. He did not consider this a regular summons; and if they appeared, and were acquitted, he did not enter them in his returns at all; if convicted, they went to swell the number of convictions. To this, of course, I was obliged to put a stop.

With reference to the 5,672 cases above mentioned, I find that only 5,174 accused were summoned, that only 3,756 actually appeared, and that of these 1,734 were convicted. It is probable that at least 20,000 accused were mentioned by name in these cases, as if a man has even a verbal quarrel with another, he will rush off and accuse his whole family probably of house trespass and plunder; and the number of persons summoned, therefore, shows that these complaints were carefully sifted. After summons, too, a good many cases are compromised or struck off in default of the appearance of the parties.

This species of litigation is no doubt a great evil, and in my opinion ought to be checked, to the extent even of discouraging a few individuals who have real cause of complaint in small matters from rushing into Court.

Dacca itself was a most litigious place; and on an average ten cases of the above nature used to be filed in my Court every Court-day. To check this, I adopted the plan of not making over to Lang the power of receiving these complaints while I was absent on my district tours, but compelled the suppliants for justice to follow me about. The result was, that the number of institutions dwindled down from fifty or sixty to about four per week during my tours; and I did not find any accumulation on my return.

I considered myself justified in doing this, as, if anything really serious did occur, the aggrieved party could go at once to the police; and I believed that every institution of a petty complaint thus avoided was a gain. Further, this procedure was a necessity in the subdivisions where the subdivisional Magistrates had no one to leave in charge while they were out on tour, so that I only brought the facilities for litigation in the head-quarters' subdivision down to a level with those in the others.

In addition to the criminal statistics, the return of the pounds and ferries, the zemindarree dâk (district post), and the road report had all to be prepared at this time. This last did not give very much trouble, as the total amount available for expenditure on roads and canals was only £2,000 per annum, not much for an area of about 3,000 square miles.

The financial year in India does not end on the 31st of December, but the 31st of March; and thus we district officers were relieved from the task of preparing our Magisterial and Collectorate returns simultaneously. These latter were made up to the 31st of March, and were due on the 1st of May. They were much more numerous and complicated than the others.

Having got my Magisterial returns despatched, I started on tour again with a view to getting as much "Settlement" work completed as possible before the end of the financial year.

This is a very heavy item in the Eastern Bengal districts, the big Ganges and Brahmapootra, with their various offshoots (as I have mentioned before), cut into

the soft alluvial soil like so much sugar, and, with capricious oscillations from side to side of their broad channels, create many new and destroy many old estates, either wholly or partially, each rainy season.

The law on this point is, that the new land belongs to the riparian proprietor of the estate to which it is an accretion; and it is considered an accretion if any part of the channel between it and the neighbouring bank is fordable at any time during the year. An island with unfordable channels on every side, is the property of Government.

If the estate destroyed were permanently settled, that is to say, the revenue payable to Government were fixed in perpetuity, the result would be, that the owner would allow it to be sold in default of payment, in accordance with the revenue law. It would be bought by Government at the auction for the upset price of 1 r., or *2s.*; the estate would be searched for, not found, and so struck off the revenue roll. I have bought on behalf of Government many an estate in this way, shown in the roll as comprising many thousand acres, for the sum of *2s.* There was, however, often collusion with the native Ameens sent out to make inquiries in these matters, and I have more than once recovered estates, or portions of them, supposed to be entirely gone.

On this occasion I travelled by boat; and this was the best time of year for the purpose, as the rivers were now at their lowest, and channels, if ever fordable, were so now. The procedure for taking possession of an island, was to erect a bamboo post and claim it in the name of Govern-

ment. We would then settle it with a farmer at a low rate of rent, say 4½*d.* an acre, for five years; and after that we would sell the proprietary right by auction, the purchaser acquiring the ownership of the land subject to a fixed annual revenue payable to the Government. Buying these islands was very speculative work, for one thousand acres might in the following year become a hundred thousand, or might disappear altogether.

It was very often exceedingly difficult to get exact evidence as to the channels being fordable or not at any time of the year, as it was not possible to fix the date on which the water would be at its lowest, and there was no received interpretation of the word "fordable." On one occasion, I recollect, a riparian proprietor claimed an island as an accretion to his estate because a retainer of his, seven feet high (a giant) had once forded the channel.

Disputes on these points involved us Collectors in endless litigation. We generally won the cases we thought fit to contest; but occasionally it was almost impossible to decide who was in the right.

Another phase of this work was the renewal of "settlements" of estates, the proprietary right of which still remained with Government, and the revenue (or rent) of which had only been fixed for a term of years. There were always a great number of these pending, and at each re-settlement it was thought that the Collector should demand an enhanced rate of rent.

The procedure was, to send out an Ameen as early in the cold weather as the state of the country would allow, to measure the estate and draw a map showing the various

descriptions of land, and suggesting rates of rent for each species. When his papers were ready, the Collector himself or some Deputy Collector to whom the case had been transferred, would proceed to the spot and test the Ameen's work. He would then forward a report to the Collector, which, if approved, he would send on to the Commissioner, recommending the settlement proposed to be confirmed. In estates carrying a rental of over £50 a year, the sanction of the Board of Revenue was necessary.

But in the course of such an inquiry no end of difficulties were likely to occur. In the first place, the farmer would probably object to the rates fixed by the Ameen (if the Ameen did his work honestly), and the decision of the Deputy Collector on this point could be appealed to the Collector, and that of the Collector to the Commissioner. Then very possibly there would be a dispute as to boundaries. A neighbouring proprietor would claim part of the Government estate as an accretion to his own. This point again could be appealed through Collector and Commissioner to the Board of Revenue, and then be fought out in the Civil Courts from the Sudder Ameen through the District Judge to the High Court.

It not unfrequently happened, that while such litigation was pending, the whole estate was swept away, or the state of things so altered that any decision arrived at was inoperative.

The natives disliked the law of alluvion, as laid down according to our European ideas. They were always eager to attempt to identify the land which had been swept away from their property and joined on to their

neighbours'. If the land could really be identified, it belonged to them still, and the Civil Courts were inclined to listen favourably to evidence of identification, as it was thought hard that any one should gain at his neighbour's expense in this way. But, as far as my experience went, the accretion was always brand new sand ; and I could not understand how this could be identified as the cultivated land washed off from the opposite side or higher up the river. After all, it was a give-and-take sort of arrangement ; for what one proprietor gained one year, his neighbour would probably regain at some future time.

Many a time have I found myself utterly bewildered on a wide desert of smooth sand, with the parties vociferating round me that a certain channel was or was not the original old channel, that a certain tree was or was not the tree from which the boundary line had started, and finally obliged to come to a decision for which I could assert no reason that was really definitely satisfactory to myself. In March too the heat and glare on this sand was very trying.

But yet the settlement of these new lands was less laborious than that of old estates which had become the property of Government either by escheat or default of payment of revenue ; for in these a multiplicity of subtenancies had been created, and they all had to be inquired into and recorded, as Government allowed all existing rights to continue. Such cases, however, were of very rare occurrence in my time in Lower Bengal.

I was glad to get back to the shelter of my house, and to feel that I had accomplished seventy days of absence from head-quarters out of the ninety prescribed by the Board

of Revenue. And now came the preparation of the returns on the Revenue side.

The Board of Revenue very properly considered their prompt submission a test of efficient supervision on the part of the District Officer, and I always paid special attention to this point myself. It will be as well simply to enumerate some of the more important, as this will give a good idea of the nature of a Collector's work, or some portion of it.

1. Abstract of Business, showing among other things the amount of correspondence during the year.

2. The Budget Estimates for the ensuing year.

3. Proceedings of each Deputy Collector under the Rent Laws.

4. Land Revenue—a very complicated affair.

5. Excise.

6. Income Tax.

7. Management of Estates the property of individuals (taken under the charge of Government and managed by the Collector).

8. Management Returns of Wards' Estates.

9. Receipts and Disbursements on account of Stamps.

10. General Administration Report, which included an account of our tours both geographical and political, and also a report on the conduct and employment of all our subordinates above the rank of clerks. I used to find it uncommonly difficult to say something different and yet true about each. One was continually gravitating down to the formula, "Has performed his duties to my satisfaction." There were various other subjects of minor importance to

be reported on, and all these involved innumerable figures and entries which it was difficult to make without some mistakes. Many of these were discovered in the Commissioner's office, through whom they went to the Board, where further errors were found out, and revisions and explanations demanded.

I used to think myself very lucky if all difficulties were over by the end of May, and very often some particular return would come back to worry me for two months later.

A great deal has been said and written about the Income Tax, which was finally repealed in 1872. I believe that the parties who suffered most under it were the District Collectors, for they not only had to pay it to the uttermost farthing, in common with other officials, but had to collect it too.

I cannot say that it was a satisfactory tax; but yet I do not believe there was much oppression under it, certainly not enough to justify the very loud clamour against it, which I believe was raised chiefly by Europeans and English-speaking natives in the big towns, who could make themselves heard through the English press.

Yet I think it was collected in rather a happy-go-lucky way; but had our staff been multiplied by ten, I do not think we could have got all details strictly worked out.

One great mistake was, that the nature, the amount, and even name of the tax was changed from year to year. In 1867–68 it was called a Licence Tax, in 1868–69 a Certificate Tax, and 1869–70 an Income Tax. The natives, in common with the officials, complained that they never had

time to understand the law; and we Collectors had to make continual allowances for this very pardonable ignorance.

Each year, with the new law, the Government of Bengal would frame elaborate new rules, supplemented by further instructions from the Board of Revenue. But it was impossible for Collectors to carry these out strictly, for the supervision of the assessment and collection of this tax was thrown upon them as an addition to all their other work. It is true that special assessors were appointed. In Dacca I had two; but all appeals from their assessments lay to me, and I positively had not the time to go thoroughly into each of these.

For instance, a shopkeeper assessed, say, on a net income of 20,000 rs. a year, would assert his profits to be only 10,000 rs., and would appeal to me. On the day fixed for hearing his appeal, his books would be produced, perhaps rising four feet in height from the ground. Had there been only one such case, I might have gone all through them; but they were legion, and I had not time to do this. Even if I had done so, there was a probability that they were books specially prepared for my inspection, and did not really represent the man's business transactions.

The result, generally, was a guess at what was most likely to be a fair decision; and these guesses did not seem on the whole to give dissatisfaction. To illustrate this, I may mention that a year later than this, when Collector of the neighbouring district of Mymensingh, the agents of all the landholders came to me before the commencement of the Doorga Poojah, and said, "Assess our income tax at what you like, that we may pay up and settle the matter before

the holidays, and not have to hurry back for the purpose." I replied that I should be most happy to do this; but that I was compelled to follow the procedure laid down by the law, which necessitated my issuing notices, calling for returns, etc., etc. They went away sorrowful, but I am bound to say that after all they gave me very little trouble.

I believe that our assessors as a whole did their work fairly and honestly to the best of their ability. I always selected mine from the staff of the Educational Department. They were liked, or, at any rate, not dreaded by the people; for they never appeared on the scene to inflict punishment or to demand money. They came to give, not to take; and from their training they seemed to me to have got beyond the prevailing idea in the native mind, that power is to be used in the first instance for the personal benefit of the official.

Yet it must be admitted that they were very willing to leave the Educational for any other line where they would have more actual power; though I believe they did not misuse that power when they got it.

In Mymensingh I made special detailed local inquiries in all parts of the district, conversing with many persons who did not know that I was the hakim, and could not find out any instances of oppression by the assessors.

However, just as the native mind had got somewhat accustomed to the tax, and we had obtained a certain amount of information which would have enabled us to collect it better year by year, it was repealed. Not that I am sorry for this, for it was an intense relief to district officers, and the amount realized from it in India was very

disproportionate to the labour and disagreeables involved. Among others, the missionaries in some districts raised a great outcry against it, on the score that many poor people were assessed whose income barely sufficed to find them food and clothing. In a very few cases this had been done, though not in the Dacca district; but it was quite astonishing to find how the hundreds of oppressed villagers mentioned by them dwindled down to three or four on inquiry.

During this hot weather a case came before me in which I felt compelled to act in opposition to the missionaries. A Brahmin boy in the neighbouring district of Tipperah had been persuaded to leave his home and become a convert to Christianity, taking up his quarters with a missionary. His father, after some eighteen months, induced the boy to consent to return with him, and persuaded him to run away with him secretly, and brought him in a boat to Dacca. The missionary went in hot haste to the Magistrate's court at Tipperah, and succeeded in inducing him to give a warrant for the apprehension of the father, on the charge of abducting the boy from lawful guardianship.

Armed with this, the missionary pursued the parties into my district; and as the warrant could not be executed therein without my endorsement, came to me for the purpose. On hearing the story, I, very much to the indignation of the missionary, refused to endorse it, pointing out to him that if he could change places with the Brahmin, he would probably feel aggrieved at not being allowed to bring up his own son in his own religion. If he considered

he had any claims, I recommended him to bring a civil action. The missionary party, I believe, considered me very wicked for this; but I cannot but think that I was right.

The hot months of April, May, and June, and the steamy days of July, August, and September passed away without any unusual occurrence. There was a little war on our North-Eastern frontier, and one regiment was sent off to take part in it, being replaced during its absence by the wing of another.

This gave me some little work in the way of sending off treasure, etc., for the pay of the troops; but Government supplied the steamers, and the steamer captains took charge of the money, without any thought of their responsibility. The first amount I sent off was about 1½ lakh, or £15,000, in silver, and I had it all placed in bags weighed, etc., in accordance with the rules of the Board of Revenue. I went to see it safely on board the steamer myself; but the captain of the vessel would not even take the trouble to see the bags counted. When I remonstrated, "Put it all in," he said, "and I'll give you a receipt for whatever you say is there." I suppose that he knew he could trust me and even if he could not, he had nothing for Government to take from him, should any defalcation appear.

The sending these masses of silver about was, and is, a great expense to Government. The surplus revenues of Eastern Bengal used to come through Dacca on their way to Calcutta. At one time the Dacca branch of the Bank of Bengal used to take the coin and make a charge for remittance; but, whether their charges were too high or for

some other reason, the Government reverted to its old plan of sending its own money down.

The Bank people used simply to put it on board the weekly steamer, and get a receipt. Government used to send an escort of police, which very much increased the expense. In coming down from Mymensingh, for instance, or across from Tipperah, the treasure was packed in country boats, 5000 rs., or £500, in a box ; and to each box was attached a buoy of bamboo, with a rope, so that if the boats upset, which they occasionally did, the buoys might mark the site of the sunk treasure.

I used to look with envious eyes at this money going to be spent elsewhere, knowing what a little I had at my command for all the many improvements required in the territory under my control.

The Doorga Poojah holidays commenced about the end of September this year, and Saunders, as usual, contemplated an expedition against certain wild animals. He proposed to ascend the river Bungsee, which flows through the northern part of the district and joins the Dullasery just above Sabhar. It runs through jungle for the greater part of its course, and there is good shooting to be got on either bank. This jungle, as I have said before, comes right down to the town, and, gaining the mastery in those portions which have fallen into ruin, affords an asylum to tigers and leopards within a mile of the "chowk," or central square in the city.

While I was at Dacca two tigers were killed within municipal limits. One of the khedda (elephant-catching) establishments had its head-quarters at Dacca, so that we

always had elephants available in the non-hunting season. But it was very dangerous sport in the vicinity of the town. The ground was full of old wells, which it was impossible to see under the dense jungle that had overgrown them. On the last occasion that I was out, one elephant went head foremost into a well, and sticking there could not be extricated, and was killed. It was not carrying a howdah; but on the same day, Peel's elephant came down with its forefoot in a well. He and all his guns were thrown out, and he was a good deal knocked about, though not seriously hurt. We killed our tiger that day; but he cowered down among some old masonry ruins, and did not show fight.

On my first proposing to join Saunders on the forthcoming expedition, I received for reply, "My dear fellow, I should be delighted to have your company, but there would always be a bother about milk."

At first this rather bewildered me; but it gradually dawned upon me that he supposed I wished to take my wife and child with me, and he was afraid that our progress would always he stopped in order to wait for milk for the latter. The rains were by no means at an end, and the country was impracticable except for boats and elephants, so that we were to proceed by the former mode of conveyance, and our elephants to keep as near us as they could. In many parts of our route we should probably not be able to get milk at all; but even in the neighbourhood of villages,—a curious fact in such a purely agricultural country,—it is difficult to get milk before 11 or 12 o'clock in the day, as the natives will not milk their cows before that time;

and very often all that is available is required for family use or sold in advance, so that I frequently had to go without milk with cattle in hundreds around me. When stationary in tents, this difficulty was less felt; but when moving along in boats it was very irksome to be kept waiting, and perhaps losing a favourable wind, for a supply.

Saunders' only notion about children was, that they were always wanting milk; and that a child on an expedition of this sort would be a continual cause of stoppages. However, on my assuring him that I had never entertained the idea of subjecting my family to these discomforts, he was keen to have my company.

Our journey was a somewhat curious one. We had four boats, Saunders the largest, in which we ate and sat. Lang and I had one between us; and the Inspector of Schools, Cavendish, his own, which he had had built for himself. It was not so elaborate as the one lost in the Megna. He had come with us for the purpose of botanizing, for he was no sportsman; but he was a great whist-player, and was very useful as such in the afternoons and evenings. The fourth boat was tenanted by Mansell, the Magistrate of Mymensingh, who had come down the river to meet us.

It took us Dacca folk two days' hard work to get to our first hunting-ground, a part of the jungle called Pathargatta, and in the dry season it would have occupied at least five, for we should have had to follow the windings of the river; but at this time every ditch became a navigable stream, and we were able to make innumerable short cuts, which, though they entailed a good deal of bumping and

scraping, and the obtrusion of branches through the boat windows, saved us some sixty miles in distance.

It was very hot and muggy, and the insects were almost an intolerable nuisance after the lights were lit. It was impossible to eat or sit in peace without closing every suspicion of an aperture, and thereby making our atmosphere exceedingly unpleasant.

Our daily programme was as follows :—About 4.30 a.m., Saunders would sound a bugle, which generally startled me from slumbers I would willingly have prolonged. But he was always ready and anxious to make a start. We made a hurried toilette, and swallowing a cup of coffee and a piece of toast, landed (we were anchored close to the bank), and mounted our elephants,—we had nine, altogether, with us,—and commenced the day's sport. The jungle was all around us, so that we could commence shooting at once. Indeed, its extent and density was our great difficulty, for this being the latter part of the rainy season, every kind of vegetation was in its fullest development. It was difficult to see animals at all ; and if we missed a chance once given, it was probable we should not get another at the same creature.

But in this part of the jungle are found little hillocks, about fifty feet high, of a red ferruginous soil. The undergrowth at the top of these was not so thick as elsewhere, and it was more possible to see. The timber generally is of small size, and in this respect this jungle is altogether inferior to the mighty forests of the Terai.

We would toil on through rain and sun, till even Saunders was exhausted, about 12 or 1 ; then return to our

boats ; bathe on the roof, having buckets of water thrown over us; breakfast, and after a cigar and a siesta, play whist till dinner time, at 7 or 7.30. Our letters and papers were sent in from head-quarters in quick little boats, so that we were kept *au courant* with affairs at Dacca. After sunset we would sit on the roof or deck of Saunders' boat, if it did not rain, and listen lazily to the songs of the boatmen and the mahouts, who were camped with their elephants on the high ground by the bank of the river.

It was thorough relaxation for about ten days, and I suppose did us good, though the discomforts were great. Nearly every day we were alternately soaked and boiled in our howdahs, drenching storms of rain being succeeded by a piercing sun ; any portion of our hands or wrists exposed was skinned, and the danger we ran from thunder-storms must have been great. Perched in a howdah with four sorts of guns all ready to attract the lightning, which was playing very close around, was by no means agreeable; and I used to cover my weapons in preference to myself with a horse blanket, in order to lessen the danger, while the storms, of which we had three or four daily, were passing over. The nights, too, without punkahs, were stifling.

Our bag was a varied one, consisting of sambhur, hog deer, barking deer, prairie fowl, jungle fowl, partridge, and bears. Of deer we got plenty; and our boatmen and elephant people were surfeited with it. We only saw one tiger and two bears. We found them all one day, in the same piece of hilly jungle. Saunders knocked over the two bears right and left, and stopped them both, though we had to give them a few more shots to settle them; the tiger

I grieve to state I missed. He came charging at my elephant, and my mahout got frightened and made the animal swing round just as I fired; I nearly fell over the side, and must have looked like Punch hanging out of his box with his stick in his hand. Lang had a chance afterwards, and missed. Fortunately for the animal, Saunders did not get a shot. Nothing ever went amiss with him; his elephant never swung round, and he never had any excuses to make. But having given us two chances, the brute disappeared, and this was the only tiger we saw this journey.

On the whole, I think we were all glad to get back to the comfort of houses in Dacca, and we certainly made our boatmen row hard down the stream, when we finally started from our last hunting-ground.

And now the shadow of the great grief of my life began to make its first appearance. I found my wife far from well on my return, though I had no idea of the serious inroads the unhealthy climate of Dacca had made on her constitution; neither, apparently, had the Doctor at this time. I went on hoping that it was merely a temporary indisposition; and as I had a great deal of work to occupy me, I did not perhaps notice it so critically as I should have done. About a month after this, Lang was ordered away to conduct some important work in the neighbouring district of Tipperah, and a junior man succeeded him as Joint Magistrate, necessitating for the time closer supervision from me.

Then in December came the great fair on the banks of the Dullasery, called the Baruni Mela.

The land on which this fair is held is generally under water until within a few days of its being occupied by the mat and thatch erections which constitute the dwellings and shops of some 30,000 people for a fortnight. The soil is damp, and a good deal of sickness is engendered here. During this year there had been a great deal of discussion about cholera. Dacca had been accused of being one of the centres where it was endemic, and this fair had been alleged to be one of the gatherings from which it was propagated throughout India.

In the previous year I had deputed a Native Magistrate to look after the arrangement and sanitary condition of the gathering; but he had shown by no means sufficient energy, and this year I determined to superintend the thing myself. The Sanitary Commissioner of Bengal also had been instructed to visit and report on the fair. I had sent up a request to Government for a grant of money, to retain sweepers, and erect a hospital for the segregation of cholera cases, and to defray other contingent necessary expenses.

The reply was, that Government would supply a native Doctor and medicines for the use of the hospital; that the Civil Surgeon of Dacca would be available in case of need, as the site of the fair was only some two hours' distant from head-quarters; and that as the landholders derived such large profits from the temporary use of the land, I should point out to them that they were bound to supply the means to keep the fair in good order, and that I must judiciously use my moral influence to induce them to give the money.

I had my tent pitched just outside the fair two or three

days before it commenced, marked out the lines on which the shops might be built, leaving a broad street between each, and allowing no angles or corners where filth might accumulate unseen. Trenches were dug about 150 yards inland for *latrines*; and as I had a good staff of police on the spot, I was able to prevent any person using any other spot for the purpose. All this required the most constant personal supervision, and many shopkeepers were most indignant at not being allowed to erect their shops as they pleased. The strict rules about the *latrines* they found still more irksome, and a deputation from the richer men came to my tent to pray for some modification; but I was inexorable.

The hospital I had erected on the other side of a small creek which formed the boundary of the fair at one end; and with a good staff of sweepers, the precincts of the fair were as clean as Monte Carlo, the gambling place, which is cleaner than anything I have seen elsewhere.

It was interesting to watch this good-sized town rising with magical rapidity, and to find some 30,000 people housed, and innumerable and large shops displaying goods most tempting to the native eye, where three days before there had been no sign of a habitation.

The first day of the fair we had one case of cholera, the next, two; but the police had prompt information, and the sufferers were carried off to the hospital. These all proved fatal, and I was afraid of a heavy outbreak of the disease; but fortunately, not another case occurred. The police were so vigilant that several people suffering from mere indigestion were carried to the hospital, and I fear much

frightened at being authoritatively told that they had cholera; but no harm came of this. The Sanitary Commissioner came, saw, and approved. I think that the measures I took, though they must have been disagreeable to individuals, may be credited with the good state of health that prevailed throughout the fair.

But they cost money, and I had to get it from the landholders. There were three shareholders, and two I persuaded to pay their shares, though with some reluctance; the third was obdurate. I therefore issued a warrant for his apprehension, but gave it to a judicious police inspector, with orders not to execute it without further instructions from me, but to show it the recusant, and let him know that it would be executed if the money were not forthcoming that day. The money was paid, and I thought no more of the matter. My conduct, however, was not legal, and it was only the urgency of the case which induced me to do this,—in fact, to act the enlightened despot for the time being.

I held my court in my tent for the trial of all offences committed in the fair,—thefts, burglaries, etc.,—but these were wonderfully few; and the natives all were so anxious to employ their time profitably in buying and selling, that even complaints of assault were rare.

It was pleasant enough to sit in the door of my tent and watch the fleets of boats going and coming, and to hear the surprised exclamations of the visitors at the cleanliness of the fair; though, alas! many of these visitors were brought before me for breach of my rules and regulations. They were willing enough that the fair should be clean,

but by no means so to take any personal trouble to keep it so. I always let them off for a first offence with a very severe warning, and they were seldom brought up twice.

Many of my Dacca friends honoured me with their company at lunch, or even dinner; and a stroll through the fair when lighted up of an evening was both amusing and interesting. The articles for sale included all things in general demand, but there also were to be found brocade merchants from Umritsur, dealers in kincob from Delhi in the North-West, and mughs from the South-East Coast bringing Japan earth (cutch), while from Sylhet in the North-East came enormous cargoes of bamboos.

But some four days before the close of the fair the Civil Surgeon came down and told me that he thought I ought if possible to be near my wife. I sent instructions for my Assistant Magistrate to come down and take charge of the fair, and hastened in to Dacca. Two days after, came the mandate,—so often given in India,—that she must go to England at once to save her life. This was on a Saturday evening; and the next steamer to Calcutta sailed on the Wednesday morning at daybreak. The Doctor thought it imperative that I should go with her. I had to make arrangements for getting leave, for making over charge of my office, packing for a voyage to England, and disposing of my goods and chattels, all in three days.

It seemed impossible; but there were plenty of kind friends to give a helping hand. My packing was done, a list of my goods made and sent round for sale, and finally an auction held on the Tuesday. As usual at auctions, all the good things sold for about one-fifth of their value, and

the rubbish for about three times its worth. I had to leave all these matters to others, and probably could not have done much better had I arranged everything myself; but I was a very heavy loser by this, as is the frequent fate of us civilians.

Saunders was very kind, and allowed me to telegraph to Government for leave, and to get permission to telegraph to Lang to Tipperah to come and take over charge from me. Without this I could not have got away. I have always found the Secretariat who manage these matters most kind and considerate where there was real urgency in personal matters; and thus I was free to start on the Wednesday morning. It was a sad and sudden break-up of a comfortable home; but the journey down to Calcutta was sadder still. I thought bitterly of the friendly warning given me at Hooghly. The Doctor's mandate had come too late; and before the next steamer had sailed from Calcutta, I was left alone with my little child.

In the midst of my grief I received an urgent letter from Saunders, saying that one of the proprietors of the site of the Baruni fair had *telegraphed* to Government that I had *extorted* 300 rs. from him. I thought it best to give Saunders all details; and as I had three months' leave on urgent private affairs, I left by the next steamer to take my little girl home.

CHAPTER VI.

AT MYMENSINGH.

RESULT OF TELEGRAPHIC COMPLAINT.—APPOINTED TO MYMENSINGH.—JOURNEY THERE.—MYMENSINGH STATION.—STATISTICS.—LANDHOLDERS.—TROP DE ZÈLE.—VISIT FROM LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.—SOCIAL DIFFERENCES.—COLD WEATHER DUTIES.—GUIDE POSTS.—A CAPRICIOUS LEOPARD.—A CURIOUS SUPERSTITION.—A TIGER MARKED DOWN.—THE RAJAH OF SHUSHUNG.—LEOPARDS AND DOG.—GOOD QUALITIES OF NATIVE SERVANTS ON TOUR.—COMPARATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF PETTY CRIMINAL CASES.—SERAJGUNGE.—APPOINTED TO HOWRAH.

My stay in England lasted only thirty days; and on the 11th of April I was back in Calcutta. I was very anxious to get some appointment which should keep me there; but there was nothing available, and I was told I must go back to Dacca, the Lieutenant-Governor saying in a complimentary way that I had done well there, and he did not wish my reign to be cut short. But I had a dread of the place, and the only other appointment offered me was the district of Mymensingh, to the north of Dacca; and to get to which I should have to pass through it. This I was compelled to accept; and by the last week in April I found myself once more a guest in Saunders' house.

I was naturally anxious to know how the complaint against me of extortion transmitted by telegraph had been dealt with. It would astonish the Home Secretary to re-

ceive a telegram from a suitor, complaining of the conduct of an English judicial officer. Saunders explained that the complainant had stated, on further inquiry, that I had made him pay up more than his proportionate share of the expenditure. Government had replied that he must settle this with his shareholders. The complaint against me of extortion was ignored; and I suppose the suppliant, feeling that after all he had only been called upon to do what he ought to have done, did not press the matter. Yet this led one to think of Talleyrand's maxim, "*Surtout point de zèle.*" I am not sure that my conduct would have been approved at a meeting at Exeter Hall.

Lang was, of course, much pleased to retain his appointment at Dacca, and he and Saunders assisted me with horses on my road to Mymensingh. The distance was 100 miles, the road lay through the jungle in the north of the district, though considerably to the east of that portion where we had been shooting in the previous June. I was to ride about fifty miles to Toke, on the Banar river, which divides the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh, and there meet a boat which I had sent on three days before round by Naraingunge and up by the Lakhia river, which was to convey me to Guffergaon in the Mymensingh jurisdiction, on the banks of the old Brahmapootra, which flows past the head-quarters town of the district.

On the morning of the 30th of April I left Dacca, with all its associations, pleasant and painful,—I had not ventured to enter my old house, now occupied by Lang,—and started on my lonely ride. It was fiercely hot, and as the jungle grew denser the atmosphere became almost stifling. About

two-thirds of the way to Toke the road is cut through a gajali forest. The trees kept away all air on either side, but gave no shade, as I had to stick to the roadway from which they had been cut down; and as long grass had grown up over this, it was not easy to go quickly. I was thoroughly done up when I emerged from this bit on to some clear land, the forest trending away to the west, and found a horse of Lang's waiting to carry me the last ten miles.

Lang did not give high prices for his horses, and they were generally known for what Saunders used to call their "bad manners." This was a coarse-bred black Waler, rejoicing in the name of Devil, whose only good point was that he feared nothing, and would go straight at a boar, or even a leopard, if required; his sole desire being to run away as hard as he could. He had been sent on the day before, and was, I could see, anxious to be off somewhere. The groom had him tethered under a tree a little way off the road, which was embanked and intersected by numerous little water courses, all perfectly dry now, but crossed by wooden bridges, every one of which I knew to be broken.

The moment I put my foot in the stirrup the groom, who was evidently afraid of the animal, bolted as hard as he could, and the brute dashed off too, while I somehow managed to get my leg over the saddle, and found myself crashing amongst the jungle and going right away from the road. Despair gave me new strength; and the grass getting round Devil's legs brought him on his nose, so that I was able to turn him as he was scrambling up again, and away we flew towards to the road. Once there, I thought

I might let go his head, but before we had gone 200 yards I spied a broken bridge, and down the embankment we had to go again. Then recurred the difficulty of turning him, and this went on about every half-quarter of a mile for the whole distance, until, about the last mile, Devil began to show symptoms of slight fatigue. He was white now with lather, and I was as soaked as if I had been drawn several times through a horsepond.

However, whenever I had leisure to think, I looked forward to a cool glass of beer and a siesta on my bed in my boat. At length the blue river appeared bright and dazzling in the fierce rays of the sun; but, strain my eyes as I could, no boat could be seen. It was some relief to get off Devil's back; and I abused all his female relatives soundly to the groom who had been sent on to take charge of him; and he evidently thought I was justified in so doing. But I had been seven hours in the saddle, and I was thirsty, —thirsty scarcely expresses it,—and overdone, and my soul felt faint within me.

There was a small village containing a few huts about 200 yards distant. This offered no prospect of food or comfort; but on the bank of the river was a bamboo mat supported on four bamboo sticks, which the ferryman was pleased to dignify by the name of his house; and I was fain to lie down under the shade of this on the hard baked soil, which I soon soaked into mud.

The ferryman came and looked at me, but I was too done up to speak to him; so he went away, and in about half an hour returned with a lota of milk, which he put by my side. I appreciated this delicate attention, and

drank the milk, after which I lay down again on a dry bit of ground for two hours or so. Then, feeling a little less exhausted, I sat up, and found the headman of the village and one or two others sitting gazing at me.

They had heard from Lang's groom that I was the hakim of Mymensingh; and though this was in the Dacca district, they felt bound to be civil. I conversed with them on the ordinary topics, about their crops and cattle, and even the Income Tax, of which they did not complain. Their sole grievance appeared to be, that the estate in which they lived was held in joint undivided tenancy, but the shareholders, five in number, collected their rents separately, and thus every instalment of rent had to be paid in five different portions at five different places.

"'The Sirkar' (Government) should make a law," said the old headman, "that a general receiver should be appointed for estates held in this way. Besides, the shareholders are so jealous; and if one persuades me to give him a little bit extra for a birth, or a marriage, or a funeral, the others hear of it and are never satisfied till I give them the same."

This really is a substantial grievance, and it would be a great blessing to these poor cultivators if they could be relieved from it. It has been under the notice of Government; but nothing had been done when I left India.

In this sort of conversation I whiled away an hour; but, still, alas! no signs of a boat appeared, and I began to wax hungry, having had no solid food since my toast in the early morning. It was now between 4 and 5, and I

began to think of arrangements for the night. These simple villagers were willing enough to be hospitable, but were afraid of caste troubles if I slept in their dwelling houses. However, close by was a mat-and-thatch hut, used for storing onions and other vegetables. These were kept on a sort of mat tray running round the interior, and it was proposed that I should sleep there, ejecting the onions for the night. The headman said he could get me some "chichkee" made,—boiled rice with curried vegetables,—and bring it me on a plantain leaf. This would take an hour or so to prepare.

I could hope for nothing better, and was proceeding to divest myself of my soaked coat, and to pull off my riding boots, to try and get a little comfort, when a shout arose from the assemblage, and looking down the river I saw the welcome sight of the green prow of my boat turning a sharp corner in the stream, which had hitherto kept it concealed from view. In half an hour I was on board, and after a bath enjoyed my evening meal, in dry clothes, with a glass of cool beer and a prospect of a tolerably comfortable bed, a great deal more than I should have done, had the boat been up to time.

The little wind we had was fair; but navigation was difficult, the river being very low, and we grounded continually. By 2 p.m. the next day, however, I reached Guffergaon,—only fourteen miles distant in a straight line —the police station at which I was to disembark, and from whence I was to ride the remaining twenty-six miles into Mymensingh.

The police were drawn up to receive me; and I found a

pretty-looking grey country-bred nag, the property of the district Superintendent of Police, Starkey, ready to carry me the first stage. As I proceeded to mount, the syce said, "Zarra jaldi kijiye" (please be quick), which gave me to understand that this animal too was fidgety. However he allowed me to get on his back without much trouble, when the Sub-inspector in charge of the station approached with a glass of sherbet, and begged me to honour him by drinking it there on my first arrival in the district. I took the glass; but before I could bring it to my lips, the fidgety little animal reared up violently, and I grieve to say the Sub-inspector's sherbet was thrown all over him.

It was not possible to be dignified or ceremonious under the circumstances, so I dropped the glass on the sandy road, and let the impatient little beast go off at full gallop. This he kept up for about three miles, and then showed himself very amenable indeed. The road was sandy and grassy, and beautiful riding ground. Half way I found a horse of the Joint Magistrate, Fearon,—a nice Waler,—and he carried me comfortably on to my destination about an hour before dinner time. He was living in the circuit house with the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Curtis; and they were both out on my arrival, so that I had time to bathe and ensconce myself in some of Curtis's clothes, who was nearer my size than Fearon, before their return.

They were both perfect strangers to me; but this makes little difference in India. I was quite ready for dinner on their return from an evening walk, and got as much infor-

mation as I could about the station society during our evening's conversation.

It was decidedly limited. The Judge, Wilson, and his wife; the Doctor, Durham, and his wife; the Superintendent of Police and his wife; an European Deputy Magistrate, Atkins, and our three selves—making in all ten white faces. Other European residents in the district amounted to ten, including wives and children; and one of these was a Greek, so that we were in rather a small minority among the native population, ascertained at the last census to be 2,349,900. The area of the district is 6,293 square miles; and to control all this there were only the European officials mentioned above, and an European Deputy Magistrate at the subdivision of Jamalpore.

There were of course plenty of native subordinates.

The station, or rather that portion occupied by the Europeans, I found the next morning to be pretty enough. It is a green plain, a little over half a mile square, round which are situated some five or six houses. To the east runs the old channel of the Brahmapootra, on the south and west is the native portion of the town, and to the north the open country. A fine avenue of trees shades a road running across the southern portion and curving round the west of the plain.

There were no amusements, beyond walking and riding, —a great change from Dacca; and I began to feel that my loneliness would be more oppressive here than there, and that, after all, I had probably made a mistake in not returning there. My predecessor had left before my arrival, having been called away on special duty, and had

made over temporary charge to Fearon, so that I could take over things from him leisurely enough.

In one respect I found my trouble would be much diminished, and that was in regard to municipal anxieties. The only town in the district under municipal law was Nussirabad (the head-quarters and station),—the total receipts for the previous year had been £150; the total expenditure, £141 15*s.* 6*d.*; and the total amount of fines realized 1*s.* 6*d.*

I have already described the Court buildings in Tirhoot, —where, however, new ones were in course of construction —those at Mymensingh were even worse; and there appeared, at this time at any rate, to be no hope of getting any better accommodation. Wilson told me that the roof of his Court was in such a state that he was obliged to sit with his "sola" hat on to keep off the sun, while in rainy weather an umbrella was necessary. The squalor of my Court was indescribable.

Considering that the surplus receipts from this district, including the proceeds of the salt tax (not collected here), amounted to about £180,000, we thought we were badly treated, both in this respect and in the allowance for our roads and communications, which, for the large area of 6,293 square miles, was £800 per annum only. Every year we used to have to send off £130,000 in silver, either to Dacca or Cachar, to be spent elsewhere. But Mymensingh is about the most out-of-the-way corner of Bengal proper, and it will be some time before justice is done to it.

There was only one house available for me, which had been in the occupation of my predecessor. It had been

intended to build an upper storey; but this was left unfinished, in a state of half completion, and gave the whole a somewhat uncomfortable appearance. However, the ground floor was comfortable enough, consisting of four well-shaped rooms, and two bath rooms, with a good verandah.

This was ample for all I wanted now; though I was somewhat at a loss to understand how my predecessor, with a wife and two children, could have found it sufficient. Here I settled down, at a rental of £10 a month—ridiculously disproportionate to that I had paid at Dacca, considering the accommodation I got in return for it; but it was a case of Hobson's choice. My total expenses were not great—about 400 rs., or £40 a month, including the keep of four horses. My pay was the same as it had been at Dacca.

The hot weather and rains were dismally dull, and to me very trying. We ten got on very amicably for some months, considering that we saw each other every day. Fortunately I had enough work to occupy me tolerably. The landholders of Mymensingh were supposed to be a very turbulent lot, and some two or three years back the district had been notorious for breaches of the peace and riots, accompanied with loss of life.

Mansel, my predecessor, however, had worked with great vigour those sections of the Penal Code which make landholders liable for not preventing riots on their estates, and not giving information to the authorities of the possibility of such; and he had further always insisted on their appearance in person, and not by agent, in his Court; so that,

as my foujdari sherishtadar informed me, "Zarra dum khaya," they had had to eat their breath a little—in other words, they were somewhat cowed.

I thought it was time to throw a little oil on the troubled waters, and let it be understood that I was anxious to make their acquaintance, and be on friendly terms with them; but that if they misbehaved, the same policy would be rigorously enforced. In time they all came to see me; and I made a point of never keeping any one who had come by appointment to see me waiting an instant, and of treating them with extreme politeness. At the same time, in one or two cases of threatened disturbance, I was very severe.

By this means I made them feel that an interview with me was not likely to be accompanied by any disagreeables, and that it was better to come to me in a friendly way and get advice, than to be dragged into Court. I must say, however, that, with two or three exceptions, they were a very boorish lot; and not so well mannered as the native gentry I had previously met.

Starkey was a very keen officer, and had worked very congenially with Mansel; but it seemed to me that he threw a little too much spite into his work.

As an instance of this, I may mention, that shortly after my arrival, the Greek resident above mentioned, Kalliphronas by name, was before me on a charge of assembling "latials," clubmen, for the purpose of rioting. It was a sweltering day in May, and he was in the body of the Court, out of the reach of the punkah, among a crowd of natives, and must have been very uncomfort-

able; so I invited him to sit beside my clerks, and there get some benefit from the punkah. The case was not decided that day; but Starkey, whom I met riding in the evening, said that he was sorry to hear that I had shown this civility to Kalliphronas, as it would make him more confident about being troublesome, and would make the natives think I was favourably inclined towards him. I was much tempted to snub him; but I merely replied, that he was not convicted yet of wrong-doing in this case, and that if there were anything not in accordance with "*les convenances*," in what I had done, the blame must be laid on the Government for the very disgraceful accommodation provided.

Kalliphronas was acting as manager for Davis, the great Dacca handholder before mentioned, and had no doubt taken the law into his own hands in a good many cases. In this instance, as the evidence showed afterwards, he had collected a number of clubmen with a view to intimidating a neighbouring landholder, and they were to sleep in a cutcherry he had erected for the collection of rents from the land in dispute, and early in the morning attack the cutcherry of his rival and dispossess him. Starkey had received information of this. The scene of action was about twenty-five miles from head-quarters. He kept his knowledge quite quiet, but marched a strong body of police through the night down to the spot, and rode thither himself.

He had the cutcherry surrounded; and as the inmates came forth in the early dawn, they were pounced upon by his police. It was a great catch, as many of them were

notorious "latials," and there was no getting off against such proof as this. These men were charged under Section 158 of the Penal Code, which imposes punishment up to two years' imprisonment and fine on any person convicted of being hired as a "latial."

They were defended by an indigo-planter called Dunlop, who united that of pleader to this avocation and also agent to the Court of Wards for the estates in this district. Rather an anomalous combination of pursuits; but he was a good sportsman, and therefore a friend of Saunders, who had reported to the Board of Revenue, with whom the appointment of agent lay, that there was no objection to his uniting all these functions. It was somewhat curious that he was always engaged in defending cases in which Government was practically the prosecutor. I may add that, in addition to all the above, he was also my landlord.

He conducted the case very quietly; and, as far as I could see, there was no defence to the charge. But just at the close he said to two of his client latials, "Take off your jackets." They did so, and showed their backs covered with weals.

"How did you get these marks?"

"The Police Sahib flogged us when he had caught us." I looked at Starkey, who was in court, and saw his face get crimson.

I postponed my decision till the next day, and in the meantime called upon him for an explanation. He replied that, in the excitement when the men were caught, he could not restrain himself from giving them some cuts with his riding whip. He had given them a good many; and his

energy and zeal, which had made him so successful in his capture, had considerably marred its good effects by carrying him too far.

The next day, Dunlop, with considerable tact, said he did not wish to press the matter; but hoped it would be taken into consideration in passing sentence. He thus turned Starkey's grave indiscretion to the advantage of his clients; for I thought it expedient to avoid a scandal, and let them off with a very much lighter punishment than I should otherwise have imposed.

I fined Kalliphronas £50, and bound him over in heavy sureties to keep the peace; but he was quite mollified by my courtesy to him in court, and during the ten months I reigned over Mymensingh, he never had a riot, nor allowed any of his subordinates to take part in one. Indeed, in one instance he actually gave up possession of a disputed fishery in order to avoid a disturbance, showing that he was very amenable to considerate treatment. In India the relation of the European Magistrate towards other Europeans in the interior is very peculiar; and he can do a great deal by judicious and legitimate use of personal influence.

The hot weather and rains went drearily on; but in August we were enlivened by a visit from the Lieutenant-Governor. The rivers were now full, and the old Brahmapootra had a grand volume of water, so that his steamer and yacht were enabled to anchor just opposite Wilson's house.

The yacht is on the barge principle, and has two decks. On the lower deck are the bedrooms, on each side of a long passage running between them; and on the upper is a

large saloon, and a large dining-room. The latter is fitted with windows like wire sieves, which admit the air and keep out the insects. I thought it exceedingly comfortable, and envied the staff who had the pleasures of travel with him. They, however, seemed tired of it, and were anxious to get back to head-quarters in Calcutta.

There were two secretaries, an aide-de-camp, and one or two others. The Lieutenant-Governor was anxious to see all the landholders and other men of note in the district who would come in at short notice, and to me fell the task of presenting them in proper order. I was in some doubt as to a method of procedure which should avoid offending some one or more of them. Those that came in were not a distinguished lot; and it was difficult to assign any particular grounds for the precedence of any of them. At last I hit upon the happy idea of giving them priority according to seniority; and I was happy to find that this quite fell in with their own notions, and pleased them all.

It must have been hard work for the Lieutenant-Governor receiving these stupid men one after another, and finding conversation for each; for they had nothing to say. There were, I think, thirty in all; but I suppose he was pretty well accustomed to it.

The Judge and myself gave him a joint entertainment at the former's house. I had brought an ice machine up with me from Calcutta—one of Carrè's, which makes, under favourable circumstances, about 4 lbs. of ice in five hours. It is done by very rapid evaporation, a cylinder charged with ammonia being first heated and then plunged into water.

The natives of Mymensingh had never seen ice before; and when they saw that this very cold stuff was produced from heat, their wonder was very great indeed. Wilson had got one up for himself; and the principal Sudder Ameen (the first native subordinate Judge), to show his proper appreciation of western civilization, had got one also, though the price was £25. They required somewhat careful working, and of course his servants under his supervision made a mess of it, and never got any ice at all. I was anxious that he should not be led to distrust scientific inventions, and offered to work it for him if he would send it over to my house. To this he consented, and so now Wilson and myself had the control of three machines.

The results were very capricious; and it was always a matter of anxiety as to whether ice or merely some rather cold water would be the out-turn. However on this occasion my khansamar came to me with a radiant countenance about 7 p.m., saying, "Barf sab hikmat men nikala," the ice has come out in all the machines. So we were able to give his Honour cold drinks; and, with the aid of mutton from our Mutton Club, and tinned provisions, a tolerably civilized dinner in the wilderness. I think, knowing as he did the difficulties under which we laboured, that he appreciated our efforts.

They left the next day, the Lieutenant-Governor having expressed himself pleased with my administration, except with reference to my supervision of the gaol, which seemed fated to give me trouble everywhere. New orders had been promulgated at the beginning of the year, and consequently before my arrival at Mymensingh, making over

the immediate charge of the gaols to the Civil Surgeons of the station, who were to get some extra salary, varying from £120 to £240 a year, according to the size of the prisons and the extra labour involved for looking after them. We Magistrates had been obliged to do this for nothing.

A circular, however, was also issued, making Magistrates *ex officio* visitors of the gaol, and requiring them to visit them once a week. I had misread this "once a month," and had acted accordingly. My inspections too had been cursory, as I thought Durham was wholly responsible.

I promised his Honour to be more careful for the future, and saw the party steam off with some regret at our relapse into our ordinary dulness, and some misgivings as to their getting safely out of my jurisdiction; for their course lay up the old bed of the Brahmapootra to the point of bifurcation of the new channel, and there were many shoals and dangerous places *en route*, where I had had to place quite a relay of pilots, as the depth of the river would alter every six hours.

However, I duly received information from the subdivisional officer of Jamalpore that they had passed out into the big river without a hitch; and on this point my mind was set at ease.

My more active supervision of the gaol led me to the discovery that the gaoler had been guilty of misappropriation of Government money and other misconduct. I kept the case on my own file, and finally committed him to the Sessions Court for trial. The case was a very long one, and disclosed a miserably immoral life on the part of the

accused, who was an Armenian, the details, as the papers say, not being altogether fit for publication. He was at last convicted, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

And now the social disagreeables in our small community commenced. Durham was an unmethodical man, and never seemed to be able to perform his duties at the right time. At length it happened that the corpse of a woman who had been murdered was sent in to him for *post mortem* examination early one morning, and he neglected to look at it until the next day. It was then so decomposed that he could come to no definite opinion as to the cause of death, and so the case fell through in Court.

I was obliged to call upon Durham for an explanation, and report the matter officially. The Lieutenant-Governor had not been satisfied with what he saw of his work; and the result of all this was, that he was transferred to another appointment. But it took some time for his successor to arrive, and in the meantime he perhaps not unnaturally looked upon me as his enemy.

This was anything but pleasant in so small a community; and, to intensify matters, shortly afterwards Wilson and his wife fell out with me in consequence of a misunderstanding about a game of croquet played outside my house, for which I had omitted to send them a formal invitation. With four, then, out of the ten white faces at head-quarters I was not on good terms.

Personally I wished to be; but as all salutations on my part were only met by a short nod, all intimacy ceased. A detailed account of this storm in a very small teacup

would make an amusing story; but on the whole I think it sufficient merely to mention this state of things to show how disagreeably a well-meaning person may be situated in such a limited society.

But Durham went away, and his successor, also married, was a very different stamp of man—an Irishman, but of a very practical mind and with a keen interest in his duties. After a couple of months, or a little more, Wilson thought better of it, and walked over early one morning to my house and held out the hand of friendship. How well I recollect the chuprassie in waiting, who doubtless, with all the other native servants in the station, had noticed the coolness between the principal personages therein, hurrying in with mingled surprise and importance to announce, "The Judge Sahib is coming."

In the meantime, however, the rains had ceased, and with the cold weather came in many possibilities of enjoyment in Mymensingh. This year, I recollect, the rains came to an abrupt termination on the 4th of November, in the afternoon. It was a Sunday, and in the morning there had been heavy clouds, rain, and that moist heat that makes an Anglo-Indian feel as if he were really being washed out in a laundry. But in the afternoon, as I stepped out in my verandah to consider wearily the expediency of a drive or a ride, I found the clouds gone, the Garrow hills to the north-east looking clear and bright in the setting sun, and a totally different feeling in the atmosphere.

For two months previously I had shot snipe within six minutes of my house; but the country was too wet for camping out. Now I saw preparations could be made for

a tour, and in the beginning of December I was ready to start. As I have before remarked, there were very few roads in Mymensingh; but with two tents and several native carts, which do not find any necessity for roads, or even a level country, I got about very well. My own locomotion was done on horseback.

I had two well-bred Australian horses and two good ponies, so that forty miles was a mere nothing; but I found it very worrying work, in riding over the pathless lands, to have to stop continually to ask my way. A Bengali peasant, in answer to any questions, always begins by asserting that he can't understand you. The conversation is generally as follows:—

Sahib. "Which is the way to Mooktagaccha?"

Peasant. "I cannot understand."

Sahib. "Listen, brother. You know Mooktagaccha?"

Peasant. "I am a villager, and I cannot understand."

Sahib. "Listen a little, brother. Do not be frightened. Tell me, where is Mooktagaccha?"

Peasant. "I am a poor man, I do not understand." Turns away and goes on with his work.

Sahib. "You are a Bengali. You understand Bengali speech. Do you know Mooktagaccha?"

Peasant, stupidly wondering. "Mooktagaccha?"

Sahib. "Yes, brother, Mooktagaccha. Which is the way to it?"

Peasant. "That direction." Points all round the horizon.

Sahib. "Tell me a little more exactly." And so at length some sort of information is obtained.

But this lengthy process took up much time ; so, in my character of despot, I instructed the police to put up bamboo sticks, plantain trunks, or anything that was conspicuous, as guide posts, all along the route I intended to ride, each successive post being in sight of the one preceding. I found this most pleasant; and as the country was generally good riding ground, I could go at a hand gallop for thirty miles, merely stopping to change horses, relays having been sent on before. The police could get this distance ready for me at twenty-four hours' notice.

It really was delicious, after a pleasant ride of the above description, to come, just the least bit tired, on my Swiss cottage tent, gleaming among a group of trees, and find my Singapore lounging chair in the verandah, with a small table holding a cup of tea and a book all ready, and to have an obsequious servant or two to pull off my boots and keep away intruders while the hakim refreshed himself with a cigar, and, while watching the wreaths of smoke curling up in the balmy December air, possibly fell into a gentle siesta.

This over, the sporting chuprassie, Kareem Baksh, would come with news that there were many wild geese in the neighbourhood, to be got at very early the next morning, or innumerable snipe to be shot at leisure, or, possibly, a tiger close by, or a bear, or several leopards, or a herd of sambhur.

Kareem was most remarkable for accuracy in the khabar (information) he gave, and could generally predict pretty approximately the quantity and quality of the bag to be made. For instance, if he said I should get

twenty brace of snipe, I used to find that at any rate I ought to have bagged that number.

With work and sport, I found time pass very pleasantly, though, at dinner and afterwards, I occasionally felt the want of a companion. But I had no temptation, as when at Dacca, to hurry back to head-quarters; and I made a pretty thorough inspection of the district. On one occasion I came upon a school that had not been visited by any superior officer for nine years; and this of course gave cause for a communication to the Education Department.

About Christmas time I moved up to the north-eastern part of the district, where Kalliphronas had promised to meet me. Curtis joined me as I passed through the station, and we stopped at a village about two miles out, to try for a leopard that had severely mauled two men that morning. They were literally covered with claw wounds, and the villagers begged us to dispose of the animal.

They assured us it was lying in a clump of bamboos in the middle of the village, with huts all round. We went to the spot, and found the bamboo clump to be about thirty feet in girth. I stood with my back against the mud wall of a hut some five yards off, and made Curtis do the same against another. We then got a villager to poke a long bamboo among the roots of the clump; but nothing stirred. I then made the man get some dried leaves, light them, and push them with his pole into the clump. The bamboos were green, and would not burn, but a good deal of smoke was the result. Still no movement. Curtis, who was young and impetuous, came forward, and, kneeling

down, peered into the clump. He did not appreciate the risk he ran, and I remonstrated with him ; for if the animal had sprung on his head it would have fared badly with him, and I should have been afraid to shoot. He would not heed me, and suddenly exclaimed,—

"I see its eyes. It is staring at me."

"Get up, or fire," I said,—though I scarcely believed the animal would be there,—"or he will be on the top of you."

He fired.

"Again," I said, to make sure.

He pulled the second trigger.

Still no movement ; but now we both looked into the clump, and there was a fine leopard lying dead. We had him dragged out, and found one ball had entered his forehead. The contents of the other barrel had not touched him, at which Curtis seemed somewhat chagrined, though the skin was all the better for it, and it belonged to him. The animal's conduct was very extraordinary, for generally, though so much smaller than a tiger, they show good fight when driven to bay. This one must have exhausted all his energies on the two villagers he had so mauled. In the case of Europeans, their wounds would probably have proved fatal ; but native villagers, in consequence of their simple diet, I suppose, heal in the most wonderful way.

We were just going to make a start, when some respectable women of the village sent me a most respectful message, asking to be allowed to look at the leopard's body. Of course it was necessary for Curtis and myself to be out of the way, so we went behind some huts, and I inquired of the headman what was the meaning of this

wish. He informed me that it was a belief in that neighbourhood, that if a barren woman looked on the dead body of a leopard, she would become fertile; and this was the case with these ladies. I told him that I hoped that this dead leopard would prove efficacious; and then Curtis and I rode on our way rejoicing, and accompanied by many rustic good wishes.

Mymensingh swarms with leopards, and we were literally bored with information about them; but they were generally in the dense jungle in the neighbourhood of villages, where the ground is broken and full of old wells, and therefore very dangerous for elephants. Shooting them on foot was seldom possible.

We made our way in about three days to the north-east of the district, inspecting and shooting as we went, and on the edge of a large plain covered with high grass jungle at the foot of the Garrow Hills we spied the tent of Kalliphronas with three elephants tethered close by. We had four with us, which I had borrowed from various landholders. Kalliphronas had come up with his European assistant from the south-east of the district, and we now joined camps. We began shooting in the above-mentioned jungle, which was as full of hog deer as a cover at home is of hares. We all missed a great number, but yet we could not help making a good bag.

I had knocked over one rather fine fellow, and my mahout hurried down from the elephant to cut his throat in time to make him fit food for a good Mussulman. He accomplished his purpose, and was wiping his knife on the grass, when the animal so sacrificed jumped up and ran

away. I was so surprised that I did not fire; but as he passed near Curtis he managed to stop him, and we finally bagged him. We then found that my ball had broken one of his horns, and so stunned him; the mahout had performed his sacrificial duties in a very perfunctory manner, having only just cut the skin of the throat, and the animal might have got clean away, though already prepared for Mohammedan eating.

In the evening a messenger came from the Rajah of Shushung, some sixteen miles distant, saying that some villagers had marked a tiger down in a small piece of jungle near Doorgapore, that he had had the jungle surrounded by nets on one side, and by natives on the others with burning fires and tomtoms, and that he hoped to keep the animal there until the next day.

We sent on our elephants through the night, and started ourselves in the early dawn.

This was particularly civil behaviour on the part of the Shushung Rajah, for he had reason to be on somewhat unfriendly terms with the Government of Bengal. It was a question whether any part of the Garrow Hills had been included in the Permanent Settlement made with the Zemindars of Mymensingh in 1793. In 1856, when the survey of this district was about to be completed, the survey officers attempted to lay down a northern boundary including a portion of the hills; but the physical difficulties attending the task, and the opposition of the hill tribes, compelled them to abandon the attempt, and a provisional line was laid down along the foot of the hills. The Rajah of Shushung and others objected to this, and claimed a

large portion of the hills as included in the Perpetual Settlement made with them. The Bengal Government at first settled that the claimants should prove their rights in a court of justice, and the case so instituted by them was decreed in their favour; but afterwards they very arbitrarily under Act IV. of 1864 of the Bengal Council, notified that the boundary line of the district should be that at the foot of the hills provisionally laid down by the survey officers.

There was reason for this, no doubt, on public grounds as the Zemindars practised great extortion on the Garrow folk living within the disputed limits, which led to continual raids into the neighbouring district, and the loss of several heads by unoffending villagers. But the Rajah had a grievance, as a large portion of what he considered his estate had been taken away from him.

We found that near Doorgapore meant five miles further on; but we reached the spot about nine o'clock. The patch of jungle was a triangle some three acres in extent, the apex being at the north-western end, and the base at the south. On the north and west sides strong nets had been stretched, meeting at the apex; and a net curtain, elevated on two bamboos, was so arranged that it could be let fall across the corner where the two converging nets met, and so make a sort of cage.

Just at this corner we found the Rajah, seated on a brilliant scarlet cloth spread over some bundles of grass. He had a long spear in his hand, and after the usual greetings, told me that his design was, that we should enter the jungle from the southern end and drive the tiger

into the corner; the net would be let down, and he then would spear it from outside. The animal would get its claws entangled in the netting and be helpless.

We agreed, and mounting our elephants went round to the southern side of the jungle, where we found some 200 or 300 natives tomtoming and making guttural noises enough to prevent fifty tigers coming their way. We had promised not to shoot. We entered the jungle and beat right up to the nets at the other edge, when the tiger bounded out; but seeing the Rajah and the scarlet cloth, turned round and charged us. Our elephants, I suppose, expected us to fire, and as we did not, they turned and fled. The animal pursued us to the edge of the jungle and then went back again.

This occurred seven times; and at last the mahouts, to whom it was really no joke, began to remonstrate, and I sent my salaam to the Rajah, saying "we could not drive the animal into the net, and that the elephants were being quite unnerved, so that we really must use our rifles. Would he take the back seat of my howdah?"

He consented at once, and we made our onward movement for the last time. The tiger was wounded first either by myself or Curtis, and then made several good charges. The scrimmage was exciting. The Rajah had a good pin-fire rifle by Lang, which he fired once, with many apologies, over my shoulder. He was perfectly gentlemanlike, and not the least excited the whole time. Whether he hit or not I don't know; but the animal was speedily despatched, and we then found her to be a tigress beautifully marked.

"It is a great pity," said the Rajah, "that it was not a tiger, for he would have bounded straight into the net. I have killed many so, and you would have seen a fine "tamasha" (spectacle).

We allowed him to allot the skin; and he said it was mine, which he was pretty sure to do, as I was the chief person there.

We then went back to our tents at Doorgapore, which had arrived in the meantime. In the afternoon the Rajah came to make a formal call. He said that he was ashamed to ask me into his palace, a large masonry building with a courtyard surrounded by a wall, as he was so poor that he had nothing in it fit for my highness to see.

I think he intended to imply that the action of the Government had impoverished him. No doubt he was poor; but he had some beautiful greyhounds that must have cost some money to acquire.

In the evening I strolled out into the town to inspect the police station and test certain Income-tax assessments. Kalliphronas and the others were with me, and we passed a masonry cage, like those at the Zoological Gardens, where two leopards belonging to the Rajah were kept. They were fine specimens. The pariah dogs in the bazaar were a terrible nuisance, and kept annoying us by barking and occasionally snapping at us. Suddenly Kalliphronas said, "Let us catch one of these brutes and give him to those leopards." I remonstrated at first, but at length I am ashamed to say that I consented.

We had lots of obsequious followers; and on our desire being known, a jute sack was speedily produced, and one

of the yelping brutes caught and put into it, and taken to the leopards' den. The leopards were driven into the hinder compartment, and the door or partition closed. The dog was then let down through a trap-door in the roof in the front compartment; the partition door was pulled up, and the leopards dashed in with a roar. I had fully expected that the dog would have been killed instantaneously with a blow of the paw; but instead of this, to my horror, one animal seized his head, and the other some part of his body near the tail, and began to gnaw leisurely. The wretched dog commenced to howl. I had my gun in my hand, and levelled it to kill him and put him out of his misery.

The Rajah's head man and a crowd of natives were standing by, looking on with eager curiosity. "Please don't," said the head man, "you will probably kill one of the leopards too."

"I don't care," I said, "I can't stand this." But just at that moment I spied one of my chuprassies leaning on one of my hog-spears, which he had brought out with him. I seized this from him, and, with a fortunate thrust through the bars, killed the dog immediately.

"Ah!" said the head man, "if you had waited a little, there would have been a fine tamasha."

I am much ashamed of this episode, for I could have prevented it, had I been firm; but I had no idea of this slow torture, nor had any of my European companions, who were all equally anxious to put a stop to it. The native spectators could have looked on for hours without any sort of compunction, as did the Romans, I suppose, on

somewhat similar scenes, but occasionally with human beings for the victims.

The next day we received information of the whereabouts of another tiger, and started early to look for him, but "*nusquam non est inventus.*" To make up for this we came on a number of sambhur, and bagged three,—as many as our elephants could carry,—and returned sufficiently triumphant to Doorgapore.

It was curious to notice the absolute difference between the Garrow inhabitants in the villages at the foot of the hills and the normal Bengalees of the plains. The former have the Calmuck type of physiognomy, and are probably not an aboriginal tribe, but of Mongolian descent, though how they got where they are I do not know. Their staple food appeared to be young puppies, which swarmed about their huts.

In all this neighbourhood I made as thorough inquiry as I could into the assessment of the Income tax. The people were not rich, and the proceeds small; but to the best of my belief, though so remote from head-quarters, no sort of oppression had been practised here. The Rajah had no complaints to make. Though living in this out-of-the-way part he was infinitely superior to the other boorish Zemindars of the district, and there was a gentle dignity about him which pleased me very much.

We took leave of him the next day; and Curtis and I made a two days' ride of it into the station for Christmas, while Kalliphronas branched off with his assistant to his factory in the south-east.

During this trip I had traversed some hundreds of miles

of country without any roads at all. Yet my tents were never late, and my meals given me almost as comfortably as if I had been in my own house, and I did not ascertain that one single item of crockery was broken. On such occasions native servants are simply wonderful. I overheard my khansamar thanking Allah devoutly when the orders for the final move homeward were given; but he had made no complaint to me.

In January came again the preparation of the Criminal Returns. I remarked that, though Mymensingh contains nearly 500,000 more people than Dacca, the actual number of cases decided in the latter district was more than double that in the former, in the same year. This is to be accounted for, no doubt, by the absence of large towns in Mymensingh,—Nassirabad, the most populous, containing only 5,882 souls,—and also by the longer distances litigants had to travel to reach the Courts.

There has been a good deal of talk about bringing justice to every man's door; but it has often happened to me to doubt whether in India increased facilities for litigation are an advantage. They certainly make administration much more costly. My experience of this outlying and somewhat neglected district leads me to the belief that the peasantry were prosperous, and practically, perhaps, happier than those of the metropolitan district of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, of which I afterwards had charge, which, with a smaller population and considerably less area, was cut up into six sub-divisions (and two cantonments), instead of three, as here.

For a long time pressure had been put upon the Govern-

ment of Bengal to take a proper census of the provinces under its control; and as it now appeared that the thing really was to be done, all the district officers were called upon to draw up plans for the enumeration of our respective districts. I had talked the matter over with Kalliphronas during our wanderings, and had obtained some very valuable hints from him as to how the thing might be efficiently done. But in Mymensingh, the first thing was to settle the boundaries.

The new channel of the Brahmapootra, the Jamoona, was behaving so very capriciously on the north-western side of the district, where it ought to have formed the natural boundary between Mymensingh and the neighbouring Pubna, that it was very difficult to know to which of the two districts certain villages belonged. In some cases it would annihilate a whole village; in another, it would cut in on the eastern side, and leave a village that had been in Mymensingh in Pubna, or *vice versâ*; or it would create new islands, on which, in the course of a year, one or two new villages had sprung up, and the ownership of which would be disputed by the Collectors of Pubna and Mymensingh on behalf of Government, and two or three other riparian proprietors.

I therefore drew up a scheme for the enumeration of the district, but pointed out that the first thing to be done was the settling of the boundaries. In the end of January, as the rivers were low, I went to the Jamoona, where I had several complicated "Settlement" cases to dispose of, and found that many of the lands involved were now situate on the western bank of the Jamoona, and that it was more

convenient for me to take up my quarters at Serajgunge, in the Pubna district, so I had my tents transported thither.

This was a place that had sprung into importance during the last year or two only, in consequence of the sudden increase in the jute trade. There were several European agents here, and steamers coming and going two or three times a week, so that I saw plenty of new white faces, and the change was most pleasant. Their residences were merely mat-and-thatch erections; but in India in the cold season this is quite enough shelter, and I was most hospitably entertained.

My tents were pitched on an endless extent of sand, and I was day after day engaged in hopeless efforts to come to a decision as to who were the rightful owners of this barren waste.

I had enjoyed my cold weather in Mymensingh very much; but I looked forward with horror to the dreary monotony of the hot weather and rains, and had let my friends in the Secretariat understand that I should be glad indeed to be transferred to some place nearer civilization. About 11 one morning, I had returned to my tent for breakfast, hot, almost blind from the glare of the sand, and utterly discouraged in my efforts to settle any definite boundary, when my eye fell on (among many others), an official envelope, directed, not in the ordinary way, to "The Magistrate and Collector of Mymensingh," but to "Gerald Gordon, Esq., B. C. S.," and I knew that it contained an appointment. It was to the effect that I was appointed to officiate as Magistrate and Collector of Howrah, and I

was to join at once, and that the present Joint Magistrate of Dacca, Pringle, would relieve me.

The letter had taken some days to reach me; and I imagined my successor, who, of course, would be eager for his promotion, would be already at Mymensingh. I informed my clerks that I must leave immediately,—they, of course, showing profound grief,—and at once sent horses on, to be able to ride in the next morning. It was disappointing for the Zemindars and their agents, who were assembled to get their disputed boundaries settled; but as I could not complete the case for a long time yet, I thought it better to make it over to my subordinate, Atkins, to take up without delay, as I had already deputed him to some other estates not far off.

I had fifty-seven miles to ride in the next morning, after re-crossing the river, and accomplished the distance in four hours and ten minutes. At head-quarters, I found my successor, Pringle, already arrived, and in three days I had made over charge. Wilson had made the *amende honorable* complete by giving me a farewell dinner, and I was once more riding towards the banks of the Jamoona, as I had determined to get to Goalundo by that route. There happened to be no steamer from Serajgunge for two or three days, so I entrusted myself to a small dinghy, which the boatmen promised should convey me through the night down the rapid stream to Goalundo, in time to catch the one daily train to Calcutta.

It was very uncomfortable, and I could not sleep, so that I had plenty of time to think over my past ten months at Mymensingh. For some reasons I was sorry to

go. It was a fine district for sport. Again, the Zemindars and all my native subordinates, seemed very sincerely to regret my departure. The Government Pleader, who might, perhaps, be termed the Advocate-General of the district, had made me a little speech, in which he laid stress on the fact that my moral conduct had won me the respect of all there.

I was much gratified at this, for I felt that the remark was justified by the facts; and I was pleased to find my own opinion as to the importance of morality on the part of provincial government officials thus confirmed. All that the hakim does is known and commented upon; and it is not the acts of the individual Mr. A. or Mr. B., but of the magistrate, that are called in question.

My horses, my ice-machine, and a considerable portion of my furniture, had been bought by people on the spot, so that I had only a few belongings left, which were to follow me as speedily as possible to Calcutta. Of course I arrived just too late for the train, and had to pass a tedious twenty-four hours at Goalundo.

The traffic manager, a married man, put me up, and made me as comfortable as his limited accommodation would allow; and the following evening, after twelve hours in a guard's van attached to a goods train, I found myself at the Bengal Club, with the pleasing sense that, for some indefinite time at any rate, I had no more such uncomfortable journeys to undertake.

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOWRAH.—AT ALIPORE.

HOWRAH.—PAY.—GIRLS' SCHOOLS.—CANNING INSTITUTE.—APPOINTED TO TWENTY-FOUR PERGUNNAHS.—SUBURBAN MUNICIPALITY.—CALCUTTA SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—SUBURBAN POLICE.—A MYSTERIOUS THEFT CASE.—PORT CANNING.—MULTIFORM PERSONALITY OF DISTRICT OFFICERS.—AN UNJUST AWARD.—A SOLICITOR CONVINCED BY A TIGER.—CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.—LEPERS.—WARDS' ESTATES.—ROADS.—EXAMINATIONS IN HORSEMANSHIP.—NATIVE PRESS.—PUNCHANNOGRAM.—AN ANIMAL WORSHIPPER.—THE CENSUS.—INCREASE OF PAY.—TRIP TO THE SOONDERBUNS.—ALLIGATORS.—SAUGOR ISLAND.—CYCLONE WAVES.—HOUSES OF REFUGE.—ASSASSINATION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

AFTER three days' rest, and appreciation of the flesh-pots of Calcutta, I took over charge of the Howrah district, which is only separated from the metropolis by the river Hooghly, and bears somewhat the same relation to it that Southwark does to London.

The contrast to Mymensingh was as complete as could be. The area of the district is 500 square miles, with a population of about 12,000 to the square mile. My chief work here was the supervision of the municipality of Howrah. Instead of being the administrator of a province, I had become a metropolitan "Beak." I was not an independent Collector, but subordinate to the Collector of the

neighbouring district of Hooghly. My Court was a good one, and I had quite a magnificent residential house.

Yet my pay was the same as before, for salaries are not attached to districts according to their importance, but increase according to seniority, so that a young officer like myself might be, as I was later on, in charge of a heavy district like the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, and yet drawing £700 a year less than a senior in charge of a light one like Howrah, Beerkhoom, or Maldah.

Under the regulations at this time in force, my monthly pay was 1,233 rs., equal to £1,479 per annum, made up in the following way: My substantive appointment was Joint Magistrate of the second grade, entitling me to 700 rs., equal to £70 *per mensem;* and I was officiating as a Collector of the second grade, the full pay of which office is 1,500 rs., equal to £150 per month. I was entitled to draw my 700 rs. + ⅔ of the difference between that and 1,500 rs., viz., ⅔ of 800 = 533 rs.; so 700 + 533 = 1,233 rs. As I have mentioned before, in consequence of furloughs and other causes, nearly every one in the service is officiating for somebody else. In the case of Howrah, my predecessor had been officiating, and I had only relieved him of the officiating appointment.

I believe the question of the retention of Howrah as a separate district is under consideration. I soon began to feel somewhat the less important nature of my work; but this was partially compensated for by the social enjoyments now within reach, for I could cross the river of an evening whenever disposed so to do, and I occasionally slept in Calcutta, though much disturbed by fear of the

occurrence of fires or other incidents in Howrah, when my absence might have been of disagreeable importance. But I only retained charge of this office for two months. During that time I had to draw up a scheme for taking the census here also, which, I believe, was adopted in its integrity.

I had to do a good deal of presiding at the giving away of prizes at schools. On one occasion, at a girls' school —which species of institution we are most anxious to encourage—every girl got a prize, and at last, a child in arms, about eighteen months old, was presented to me to receive one. I remonstrated with the manager of the school as to the absurdity of this; but he begged me to yield, saying that it conciliated the parents, and induced them to let their daughters come to school, and it was a great point to get them there; so I gave way.

They were all Hindus, some of very good family, and exceedingly pretty; but they were all under seven years of age, and before they were ten, would all be married and immured in the zenana—rather a sad reflection.

However, they like it, as the Indian Mrs. Grundy is of opinion that no woman can be of good family or fashionable unless so excluded from the public gaze.

At the close of the ceremony I made a short speech, which I was amused to see about a week afterwards fully reported in a native local paper, published in English, the account ending with the words, "The learned President resumed his seat amidst acclamations."

There was also a Science and Art Institution at Howrah, which had been started some few years previously

with considerable *éclat.* It was called the Canning Institute, and I am not sure that Lord Canning had not once honoured a *séance* with his presence. Like all other things dependent on native interest, the thing had been neglected and almost fallen into oblivion, but now a spasmodic effort was made to resuscitate it, and I was asked to accept the presidentship. This I graciously consented to do, and a meeting was arranged for about a fortnight later, when it was announced that the Archdeacon of Calcutta would deliver a lecture.

On the appointed evening there was a violent thunderstorm about 8 o'clock, which, doubtless, delayed the Archdeacon in his passage across the river; for we were all assembled and waiting for half an hour before he appeared. The attendance was scanty; and when he at length came in and his eye lighted on the small assemblage, I saw a look of dissatisfaction and disappointment in his face, for he doubtless expected to find the same enthusiasm that had been shown at the opening of the Institution, and perhaps hoped that his name would have proved more attractive.

I was the only European present, and seated on a raised platform behind a table. The Archdeacon was he who had been so badly treated by the palki bearers at Kishnaghur. He did not recognise me, and I did not recall myself to his recollection. The lecture was on "The Evidences in Favour of the Truth of Christianity," and was somewhat long. I am ashamed to say that I fell asleep, and was only awakened by the applause at the close of the lecture. I was expected to say something, and was for a moment at a loss what to do. However I collected myself enough

to remark that we all owed our best thanks to the Archdeacon for his able lecture, and that if any one had previously any doubt on the subject, he could not, or at any rate ought not, to have any now. It seemed as if I could not be brought into contact with this really good man, without the occurrence of some *contre-temps*.

About the end of April I received orders to take over charge of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, an appointment which I had long wished for, but which I may fairly say entails as hard or harder work than any other in Bengal, or probably in India.

The name of the district is, I believe, derived from the fact that it originally consisted of twenty-four pergunnahs; but their number has now been largely increased. The present cultivated area is 2,788 square miles; but there is also an area of jungle and swamp, forming part of the celebrated Soonderbun tract between Calcutta and the Bay of Bengal, of between 3,000 and 4,000 more. The population, including that of the suburbs of Calcutta, but not of the town itself, is 2,210,047. The district is divided into seven subdivisions, viz., Alipore, the head-quarters, in the suburbs of Calcutta, and Sealdah, comprising the remaining portion of the suburbs. Baraset, which had originally formed a district of itself, Baroipore, Busseerhaut, Satkhira, and Diamond Harbour. In addition to these were the two military cantonments of Barrackpore and Dumdum, both with a small area of rural jurisdiction. All these were under my superintendence, and I was responsible for their proper administration.

There were twenty-four towns in the district under

Municipal Acts, the proceedings in all of which had to come under my personal cognizance, the largest of these being the suburbs of Calcutta, with an area of twenty-five square miles, a population of 258,910, and an income of about £36,000 per annum; the smallest, a little outlying cluster of villages, where, the last time I looked into the financial statements, I found, after paying for its police and cost of collection of the tax, a deficit of 2s., the total annual income being £56.

Of the suburban municipality I was *ex-officio* Chairman. I had under me a Vice-chairman at a salary of £1,000 a year; but still this gave me a great deal of trouble and anxiety. The Government held me personally responsible for the management, and called upon me for explanation of any incident that might arise. We had some twenty Municipal Commissioners, and met once a fortnight for the conduct of business. It was necessary for me always to preside, as there was a good deal of friction between the Vice-chairman and certain members of the Committee, who were organized into what might be called the opposition, under a highly educated Hindu gentleman, Rajkoomar Ghose, as a leader. He spoke fluently, was very deaf, and yet fond of hearing his own voice, so that he made great inroads once a fortnight on my very valuable time.

These native Commissioners had an animus against my Vice, as they thought that the appointment ought to have been given to one of their countrymen, who would have done the work for much less money. It is not too much to say that a Bengali can live in Bengal more comfortably on £250 a year than an European on £1,000. I should have

been glad enough to save this difference, did I not think that the European work was worth the extra value. The appointment had not been made by me.

Under this Municipal Act, III. of 1874, we Commissioners had magisterial powers to try offences against the Act, and our decisions were appealable, like those of other Magistrates, to the Judge of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs. But as Magistrate of the District, I had executive powers which were not interfered with by this Act in any way.

Within our jurisdiction were the three slaughter-houses which supplied Calcutta with butcher's meat. They were kept by Mohammedans, who drove a thriving trade, and were rich and prosperous. But they were in a filthy state, indeed were a disgrace to any civilized community, and in my opinion were so constructed that it would be impossible to improve them. Before my assuming charge of this post, two Acts had passed the Legislative Council bearing on this point, with a view to enable the Suburban Municipal Commissioners to control these slaughter-houses.

The Municipality of Calcutta proper had built, at a great expense, new slaughter-houses also within our jurisdiction, fitted with every modern improvement; but the butchers were all Mohammedans, and stuck to their Mohammedan proprietors. Not one drop of blood stained the polished floor of the Calcutta palatial building, and thus it stood in unused loneliness for two years.

The gist of the Act above mentioned was, that the existing slaughter-houses should not be used without a licence from the Suburban Municipal Commissioners, under pain of a daily fine. But the butchers continued to use

them in defiance of the Act. Many were the prosecutions, and many the sentences of fine by the Municipal Commissioners; but these were all reversed on appeal to the District Judge, Bramstone.

He considered the Act tyrannical, and always found some technical loophole for the slaughter-house people. If we prosecuted the butchers for using it, he ruled that the owners were the users, and not the butchers. If we prosecuted the owners, he ruled that the butchers were the users. And so this horrible state of things continued.

I wondered that a plague was not propagated from these filthy places. Twice I visited them, once on a dry and once on a wet day, and was nearly overcome with nausea on both occasions. I consulted medical men of eminence, who were of opinion that not a vestige of these places should be allowed to remain. At length at the suggestion of an acute friend I decided to put in force my magisterial powers under a very comprehensive section of the Criminal Procedure Code, Sec. 308 (as then numbered), which runs thus:—

"Whenever the Magistrate of the District . . . considers that any trade or occupation, by reason of its being injurious to the health or comfort of the community, should be suppressed . . . he may issue an order . . . to the person carrying on such trade or occupation . . . . to suppress such trade . . . within a time fixed in the order . . . or to appear before him within the time mentioned in the order, and show cause why such order should not be enforced."

Sec. 310 recites that "the party to whom this order is

issued, must either obey it within the time specified, or appear and show cause against it, or apply for the appointment of a jury to try whether the order is reasonable and proper." As the Magistrate, in case of application for a jury, appoints the foreman and two jurors out of the total of five, and a majority decides, a jury is seldom applied for. In accordance with this, I ordered the suppression of the trade within a fortnight, and the parties appeared to show cause against the order.

In the meantime the case became the subject of pretty general conversation in Calcutta. At the Club I found some, who had not seen, considered the order tyrannical; others thought that Calcutta would be deprived of meat, as the butchers would not use the municipal slaughter-houses. The trial came on; and even here there was the usual conflict of experts.

But the only expert against my view was a Mohammedan Doctor, who affirmed that he smelt no smell, and saw no filth. There were numerously signed petitions on both sides of the case; on the one side saying that residence in the vicinity was rendered intolerable by the effluvium from the slaughter-houses; on the other, that the inhabitants in the neighbourhood derived great benefit to their health from the smell. In this latter I found all the signatures in one handwriting, that of the attorney for the principal defendant. It was also proved that the king of Oudh's aviary at Garden Reach, containing (including pigeons) some thousands of birds, was supplied with maggots from this source. The purveyor of this bird food was subpœnaed, and denied that he had any connection with the

slaughter-houses. He was a big burly "mehtur" (sweeper caste), deeply pitted with small pox, and looked his profession.

One day, some time after the case was finally settled, I met him hanging about the verandah of my Court, and asked him why he had given such evidence. He replied: "What could I do? My daily bread was in danger, and what does it matter if a mehtur like myself tells a lie."

However, there could be no doubt about my decision, which was to the effect that the order for suppression must be obeyed. Against orders under this section there was no appeal to the District Judge; but he could, if applied to by the defendants, send for the record, and forward it to the High Court in Calcutta with such remarks as he might think necessary. This application was made to him, and he did so forward it, with a very strong and really extra-judicial recommendation that the order should be quashed. The matter was argued before the Chief Justice of Bengal, and the best talent available in Calcutta was employed on both sides. In the end, my order was upheld, and in three days the municipal slaughter-house was in full work.

Thus by a single section under the Criminal Procedure Code, this trade, which I was informed brought in several thousands sterling a year to the proprietors, and which had been carried on in successful defiance of two special acts framed against it, was at once suppressed.

On the Sunday after the case was decided I met the genial old Chief Justice, who said with a smile as he passed, "Are you going to church to pray for those poor Moham-

medans you have ruined?" Two days afterwards he himself was assassinated by a Mohammedan on the steps of the High Court. It had no connection with this matter; but, apart from the shock caused by the atrocious murder of so good and gentle a man, I felt personally a sense of risk.

Ameer Ali, the proprietor of the principal slaughter-house, had, I had been told, threatened to take my life; and for some time I kept a careful look-out for the approach of any suspicious-looking Mohammedans. But nothing happened beyond threats of a civil suit against me for damages, which of course was never instituted.

The suburban police were not under my immediate orders, like those of the rest of the district, but were subordinate to the Chairman of the Calcutta Municipal Commissioners, who was also Chairman of Police for Calcutta and the suburbs. A very curious case occurred just at the time of my arrival here.

At Belvidere, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, were staying a Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, connections of his. One evening Mrs. Phillips missed a diamond ring, and information in due course was given to the police. As the loss had occurred in the house of the Lieut.-Governor, a great stir was made, and it was suggested that a detective constable should enter Phillips' service as a khitmutgar (table servant), and see what could be discovered. Suspicion had fallen upon the ayah (lady's maid); and the constable in disguise made love to her, in order to get her confidence.

At length he made a statement to his chief, the Chairman

of Police, who had the ayah arrested, and the following was the case for the prosecution. The constable alleged that he had succeeded in gaining the ayah's confidence, and she had admitted to him that she had stolen the ring. She wished to sell it; but was afraid. However, she had picked out one of the diamonds, and if he could dispose of this for her successfully, she would give him another for the same purpose. She had told him this, and given him the diamond under a tree on the Maidan (plain) of Calcutta, where she had appointed a rendezvous.

There were witnesses to prove that the constable and the ayah had been seen together under this tree at the time stated. The diamond was produced, and Mr. and Mrs. Phillips both testified that to the best of their belief it was one of those from the missing ring. The defence was merely a denial, and the evidence for the prosecution remained unimpeached. The case was tried before the Deputy Magistrate of Alipore, who convicted the ayah and sentenced her to eighteen months' imprisonment. She appealed to Bramstone, who upheld the conviction and sentence. The diamond was made over to the plaintiffs.

Shortly after this, Phillips and his wife were moved to Serampore, of which subdivision he was to have charge, and on unpacking their goods, the missing ring was found jammed in an inkstand, with all the diamonds *intact*. They sent the ring down to me; and I recommended that the ayah should be pardoned. Bramstone held out stoutly that the conviction was legal, and that the woman's relatives might have had another diamond put into the ring, and the latter placed where it was sure to be found.

Mrs. Phillips now recollected that on the evening of the loss, the Lieut.-Governor's little daughter had been playing about her room, and might have put her ring into the inkstand. But she could not recollect whether the inkstand had been unpacked there or not, so this was not much use. I carried my point, and the ayah was released.

But what was to be done with the surplus diamond, which had also been returned to me? The constable had been arrested with a view to prosecution for perjury. It appeared to me that it was more than probable that the police had fabricated this evidence, and gone to the expense of purchasing the diamond,—which, after all, was only valued at £2 10*s.*,—to get the credit of convicting somebody of the theft. The constable, however, stuck to his story.

Shortly afterwards Mrs. P. showed me a diamond locket with one diamond missing, into the place of which I found the surplus diamond appeared to fit. This gave rise to the theory that the ayah had picked the diamond out of the locket, with which to try the fidelity and business qualities of the constable, keeping the ring intact for future disposal, and that in consequence of what followed, her friends, to whom she had entrusted the ring, had managed to get it restored as above described.

I took the locket and ring to a jeweller, who said that the surplus diamond was of the same character as those in the locket, but that it was not possible to swear to its being the missing diamond, as he could buy a thousand others exactly similar in the Burra bazaar in half an hour. Under all the circumstances it was thought advisable to

do nothing further, and the real facts remain a mystery to this day.

Another of my troublesome municipalities was Port Canning, though not from a municipal point of view. Some six or seven years previously a scheme had been started for the creation of a new port and town on the Mutlah river, some twenty-eight miles S.E. of Calcutta, and consequently so much nearer the sea. It was argued, that the navigation of the Hooghly was dangerous and difficult for large ships, and that the Mutlah was a fine deep river, free from shoals and quicksands, and that, if facilities were given, a great proportion of the shipping coming now to Calcutta by the Hooghly would go up the Mutlah to Port Canning instead.

The support of the then Lieut.-Governor of Bengal was obtained to the scheme, a company was formed, a large capital subscribed, and shares, issued at £100, went up to £1,300 for a time. A large area of land was acquired, marked out, and cleared of the Soonderbun jungle, embankments were made to prevent inundation, jetties were constructed, tramways laid down, and an enormous amount of money spent. Two sites for the construction of forts for the protection of the new town were in course of acquisition, at a little distance lower down the river, and a railway twenty-eight miles in length made, to connect the whole with Calcutta, at the enormous cost of £744,000. I do not understand how such a large expenditure could have been incurred on this item.

The whole thing was a most disastrous failure.

The embryo town had been incorporated into a mu-

nicipality, and I on assuming charge of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs became its chairman *ex officio*. I went down by the railway to look at the spot. It reminded me of the Garden of Eden in Martin Chuzzlewit. On the plans I took with me were marked out Dalhousie Square, Canning Street, etc. etc., represented by plains of waving grass. The tramways were concealed by the rapidly encroaching vegetation; the iron jetties stretched out in a ghostly way into the lonely river, the banks of which all round were covered with the dense Soonderbun jungle, and masses of broken iron, old wheels, a tram engine, and other *débris* of things that had originally cost many thousands of pounds lay scattered about, corroded by the salt in the soil, and worth perhaps a few rupees.

Our only income was derived from the lease of our streets and squares as grazing grounds. When the speculation was still in favour, the municipality had borrowed large sums on debentures, and £30,000 had been lent to them by the Bengal Government. They could not of course pay the interest due on these, and Government was the first to sue for repayment of the principal.

I now, as Collector, had to bring an action against myself as Chairman, and to confess judgment. The Court appointed me as agent to the judgment creditor, under the Civil Procedure Code; and thus I represented three different persons, and frequently had to sign my name to the same document three times over, in cases where the consent of these three separate functionaries was necessary. This arrangement at any rate avoided all chance of any difference of opinion.

But district officers are accustomed to this multiplied personality. The offices of Magistrate and Collector are worked separately, though united in one individual; and the clerks in each (especially in the districts near Calcutta, where English education is rife) were exceedingly fond of entering into acrimonious correspondence with each other. I used to find drafts of letters from myself as Magistrate to myself as Collector accusing myself of neglect and delay, and very trenchant replies placed before me for signature. These matters were always settled by calling the clerical disputants before me and administering a sound wigging to both; thus destroying in embryo much promising Anglo-Bengali literature.

A somewhat amusing incident occurred in connection with the sites to be acquired for the forts above mentioned in connection with Port Canning. The land was to be taken under the Expropriation Act, VI. of 1857. We were able to abandon the proceedings with reference to one of these sites, but in the other case they had gone too far. The vendor was a grantee of one of the Soonderbun lots, and had demanded a very high price for his land. Not being able to come to terms with him, my predecessor as Collector had, under the Act, referred the matter to arbitrators. They, it turned out, were close friends of the grantee and had awarded him an iniquitously high price, valuing this uncleared jungle spot at the same rate as cultivated land in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. According to law, the arbitrators' award was final.

But just before I arrived, a new Lieutenant-Governor

had been appointed to Bengal, who took up all this Port Canning business with no very friendly feelings. He found serious fault with all concerned in this case, which had been very carelessly carried on, found out some irregularity in the proceedings, refused to pay the money, and said he would stand the risk of a suit. I, as the present Collector, had to prepare the defence, and with very little idea of success; for if the award were final, I could not plead its unfairness, and my only hope lay in the irregularity of the proceedings of my own office, which was equivalent to attempting to turn our own neglect to our own advantage. However the case, much to my surprise, was decided by Bramstone in our favour.

Still there lay an appeal to the High Court. The counsel for the plaintiff was a friend of mine, and after we had been served with notice of appeal I spoke to him about the case one day at the Club. "There will be some delay in bringing it forward," he said; "the fact is, that our solicitor, who is a conscientious and energetic little man, thought he would go and personally inspect the spot. He went there in a boat, and landed, but had not gone five yards before a tiger came at him with a roar, but sprang on one side and did not actually touch him. He got back into his boat as quickly as his fear would allow him, and since then his opinion of the fairness of the price awarded has been considerably modified."

"Thank you," I said; "that must come out in appeal, if it can possibly be brought in."

"Oh! for God's sake don't do that," he said. "You must not betray my after-dinner confidences."

The appeal did not come on for hearing as long as I was in charge of this district.

The new Lieutenant-Governor was a man full of energy and theories, in the execution of which he appeared to desire to alter everything that could possibly be altered. He changed the arrangements for the registration of documents, which had only been recently settled and were working well; he set all the Education Department against us Magistrates, and against himself, by giving us power to interfere with their proceedings; he had a scheme for the appointment of elective Municipal Commissioners; and he instituted an improved system of weekly reports about the weather. About these he was terribly in earnest.

He had a form prepared to be filled up weekly by us district officers. It only consisted of three columns, headed, 1. Rainfall, 2. State of the Crops, 3. Remarks; but it had to be sent in at the latest possible hour on a Tuesday, so as to appear in the Bengal Government *Gazette* on the Wednesday. I had to get separate returns from each of my nine subdivisions, incorporate them in one general return for the District, and forward them to the Secretariat.

On one occasion the Secretariat made a mistake in totalling certain decimals; and for this the Lieutenant-Governor very unreasonably wigged me.

On another occasion, in April, when the weather was altogether normal, my entry in the column of "remarks," was simply the word "hot." There really was nothing else to say; but this appeared to excite his anger in the most violent manner, and he wrote me a very harsh official

wigging, calling me apathetic and threatening me with very severe measures if I did not mend my ways. A copy of this wigging was sent to all other district officers, for their information and guidance; and thus I was held up as apathetic to all my *confrères*.

His official prejudice against me lasted for months, and nothing coming from my office could give satisfaction; neither would he admit that my work was hard, much harder than that of any other Magistrate and Collector. In all social intercourse he was kind and courteous enough, but officially for a long period he made my life a burden to me. I had plenty of sympathy; but though this was some consolation, it did not make up for the constant worry to which I was subjected.

Though I feel sure that he had no personal dislike to me, yet the tendency of his mind was such that he was apt to look with suspicion on all officers generally well spoken of by his predecessor and the Commissioners, Secretaries, and others who had served in high places under him. I think too that he felt his term of office was short, and that to carry out the various changes and reforms he wished to introduce, it was necessary to be incisive in his official comments, even to harshness.

I will say too, that he very greatly strengthened the hands of us Magistrates and Collectors, who had been far too much subordinated to the heads of departments at head-quarters; and he also stirred us up to a wholesome activity, though he irritated us unnecessarily.

Among my other duties I was *ex officio* Chairman of the Committees of three hospitals, a visitor of the great

gaol at Alipore, and of two lunatic asylums. None of these were sinecures, though of course being visitor of the gaol was much less trouble than being in charge of it. In the charitable institutions above mentioned complications were continually causing troubles about the accounts and financial arrangements; and as Magistrate and Collector, though with more to do than any other member of the Committee, I was always expected to be on the sub-committees for special inquiries into these matters.

In conjunction with Bramstone, I was also trustee to a charitable fund founded by Prince Gholam Mahomed, descendant and representative of our old enemy Tippoo Sahib of Mysore. He now lived peacefully in the suburbs of Calcutta, where he had built a palace and an elaborate mausoleum to his mother, who had died there. In honour of her memory, too, he had funded a sum producing an income of about £750 a year. This was to be distributed in monthly sums of 2 rs., or 4*s*., each to persons afflicted with leprosy, two-thirds of them to be Mohammedans, Gholam's own religion, and the rest Hindus.

Gholam did not trust his own countrymen, and got the sanction of the Government to the appointment, as trustees to the charity, of the Judge and the Collector of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs for the time being. Bramstone had been the first trustee; and he, like Gholam, distrusting native agency in such matters, arranged to distribute this charity monthly with his own hands, jointly with the other trustee.

The lepers came in hundreds to the enclosed space in which the mausoleum was situate, and squatted in rows,

that is to say those who had any limbs on which to squat; those who had not, were carried by their friends or dragged in little carts like children's toy carts. Only those whose names were entered on the register were admitted into the enclosure, but the gates were besieged by a crowd of less fortunate wretches, who clamoured for admission or for donations from the small surplus of the monthly instalment remaining undistributed in consequence of absenteeism or death among those on the register.

The assemblage of these fragments of humanity was a ghastly sight, and the task of distribution on a hot May or June morning was anything but pleasant. On one occasion, a woman, really a fragment of a human being, for she had neither arms nor legs, having been dragged to the spot in one of the little carts above mentioned, was seized with the pains of labour and delivered of a male child, during the distribution of alms. This process of nature gives Indian women of the lower class very little trouble. The idea was very horrible; but the baby was a pretty little thing, and continued so, as long as I saw it, for some months afterwards.

Prince Gholam had a large amount of house property in Calcutta, and was anxious that I should be a sort of trustee for the management of this also. He offered to keep me a carriage and pair of horses specially for this work. I suppose he thought that, being of blood royal he had a right to command my services; but I am happy to say I was able, with the approval of Government, to decline this task.

There were also several minors' estates in the district

that had been taken under charge of the Court of Wards, and which, under the regulations before described, gave me a great deal of trouble, the more so as the present Lieutenant-Governor was of opinion that the administration of these should be of a more active nature than hitherto. These too often involved me in complicated legal proceedings, and occasionally I had to protect my minors against their own legal advisers.

For instance, on one occasion it was a question of re-opening a mortgage, in favour of a minor. The proceedings were merely formal, and I employed, as I was bound to do, the Government Solicitor in Calcutta. His firm sent me in a bill of costs of 1,200 rs., which appeared to me out of all proportion to the services rendered. I remonstrated; but they declined to reduce the amount. It so happened that one of my Deputy Collectors had been clerk in a solicitor's office, and I got him to tax the bill. He considered that 400 rs. should be deducted. I therefore demanded this reduction, stating that if it were not made, I should take it before the taxing officer. To this I received a reply, that the firm would make a reduction of 100 rs. only, and warning me that if I did not succeed in getting 20 per cent. taken off the bill, I should have to pay costs before the taxing officer. However I did venture to go before the taxing officer, sending my Deputy Collector to represent me, and actually 500 rs. of the 1,200 rs. were taxed off.

My roads too gave me a lot of trouble, for I had not anything like sufficient money to keep them in order, and even this was not supplied in time to allow me to com-

mence repairs at the proper season. This was caused by the budget on this account not being ready sufficiently early. There are very few stones in Lower Bengal. In the dry weather the soil is a fine dust; in the rainy season it becomes liquid mud. To obtain material to make a road passable throughout the year, it was necessary to make bricks, for there was nothing else available.

To make a road economically and successfully, it was advisable to have the bricks all ready by the 1st of June, to lay them before the end of July, first a layer of whole bricks, then a layer of rubble, and then a layer of brick dust (soorkee) then roll the whole and let it consolidate during the rains of August, September, and October.

The budget showing the amount available for the district was never ready till the middle of June; this gave me no time to get contracts made with respectable men for the manufacture of bricks, and their delivery on the roads; and the result was, that the so-called "metalling" was not completed till the end of the rainy season, and then had no chance of becoming properly consolidated.

On the other hand, I was not allowed to retain the money until the following year; for any amount not expended on the 30th of April was all swept back into the General Treasury.

I addressed many remonstrances to the Lieutenant-Governor about this; but he never would listen to me, though he was always very angry if he personally suffered any inconvenience from my roads being out of repair. Indeed he actually cut down the annual amount previously allowed me, as a new road cess was about to be introduced

and he wished the landholders to feel the necessity of its imposition.

This cess was to be charged at so much per rupee of rental paid by the cultivator to the landholder, and was payable in the first instance wholly by the landholder, who could recover half the amount from the tenant. It was much objected to by those who had to pay, as they asserted it to be a breach of the Permanent Settlement; and it was certainly something very like it. The institution of this cess, then, necessitated a record of all holdings in those districts in Bengal into which it was introduced, of an extent and a completeness hitherto unknown. It was introduced into the Twenty-four Pergunnahs soon after I took charge, and caused the appointment of a special Deputy Collector and some fifty clerks, and also the preparation of voluminous and elaborate monthly, quarterly, and annual returns for the Board of Revenue, whose supervision gave me a infinity of trouble. The net amount to be realised after all this trouble would be very small; but doubtless the information thus obtained would be very valuable for statistical and other purposes.

Again, the Lieutenant-Governor established a subordinate executive service, in which natives exclusively were to be employed, but to obtain appointments in which, they had to pass an examination, among other things, in riding. They were to obtain certificates of their proficiency in horsemanship from the Magistrates of their respective districts, or, *hei mihi*, from the Magistrate of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, as many of them would probably come to Calcutta to study. These candidates were a terrible nui-

sance to me. At the very first, I thought the process of testing their horsemanship rather amusing; but I soon found it occupied valuable time in the morning, and was a great drag on me.

The first candidate of all came to me on a miserable pony that I fancied must have been starved into quietness for the occasion. I told him that I could not look upon any amount of mastery over this animal as a test of horsemanship, but I would let him try his hand on one of mine if he liked. After much hesitation he consented, and I put him on an animal which had been a charger in the Viceroy's body-guard, and was quiet enough, though it might require just a little management.

I was also mounted, and we started from the door of my chambers in the enclosure of the U. S. Club, intending to cross the road on to the Maidan (plain). But I observed my candidate clutch the curb tightly, and away went his horse round and round the compound, in and out the houses and outbuildings, creating havoc among the native servants' pots and pans, and yet avoiding coming to grief in a very remarkable manner. Presently he pulled up with his head against the wall; and coming alongside, I tied the curb rein in a knot, and told him to trust to the snaffle.

We then left the enclosure; but unfortunately, just at that moment, two men came by at a sharp canter, and my candidate's horse, that had probably became a little excited, swerved off to the left, and dashing down Park Street, disappeared in the distance; for I thought it prudent to follow leisurely. In about ten minutes I came up with

the candidate on foot, his clothes covered with dust. "I alighted myself" he said in his Baboo English. "But where is the horse?" I asked. That he did not know.

He merely wished me to understand that he had "alighted himself," meaning, he had dismounted voluntarily; the horse was caught and brought back by a policeman, but he would not mount again. Poor fellow, he was really very plucky, though he could not ride, for I found afterwards that he had broken two ribs. On this occasion I did not grant him a certificate; though some months afterwards, when he came again completely recovered, on a somewhat better, but very sedate animal, I did so.

The native press, who always found great fault with the Lieutenant-Governor's measures, made capital of this as an instance of what would result from them, and also accused me of putting the unfortunate candidate on an unbroken Australian horse.

Indeed, the native press was one of my serious nuisances. Some dozen native papers were published in the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, and occupied themselves very busily with the doings of myself and my numerous subordinates. The most astounding and utterly unfounded statements were made. There was an official called the Government Translator, whose business it was to make abstracts of these statements in the native press, and they were published in English in a weekly form, which we Magistrates used to call the *Weekly Sneak*. A copy of this was sent to each Commissioner, and one specially to me, the only Magistrate who received one, as so much was said about matters under my control. I had to look

through this, and send remarks on or replies to each paragraph which touched upon any occurrence in my district, in anticipation of demands for information from the Government.

In common with many of my colleagues, I used to think there was a great deal of harm in this, and I may here quote the opinion of an experienced Commissioner. "I fear there is not a native Deputy Magistrate in the country who could deny that he was afraid of becoming the subject of a personal attack in a native newspaper. There are, doubtless, very few European officers, even of high position, who would not also object to it; for, with very rare exceptions, we wish at least not to be noticed in the public press, as their praise is as likely to do us harm as their blame is.

"But the case of a native Deputy Magistrate and his subordinates, especially at an isolated subdivision, is very different. He knows very well that the moment any scoundrel denounces him in a native paper, not only must he endure the local wit, ridicule, and annoyance, but he has to await the publication of the Government Translator's abstract of the native papers, and the almost inevitable call for an explanation from some one of his superiors, from the Magistrate to the Governor-General.

"I know of scarcely any more exquisite but certain process of torture than that which begins with a scandalous attack on a public officer, and leads up to a call on him for explanation. Even if his explanation is accepted, he has gone through the ordeal; he has been mentally tortured while his assistant has lurked in the darkness, and is

beyond the reach of punishment. This villainous misuse of the public press affects the whole of the administration of justice by native officers."

These remarks led to a consideration of the expediency of continuing to circulate the Government Translator's abstract; but nothing was done while I remained in India. Another extraordinary trouble to me was the administration of the Government estate of Punchannogram, which, being translated, means "fifty villages." This was situated partially in Calcutta itself, where I had Revenue jurisdiction, and partially in the suburbs. It had become split up into some 9,000 holdings; and the rental being payable half-yearly, its collection was a matter of some labour.

An obstinate old half-caste was in immediate charge, who did his duty very badly, and allowed the rents to get continually into arrears. This necessitated endless reports to the Commissioner and the Board of Revenue. I managed to get him transferred elsewhere at last, but he had been so long at this post, some thirty-five years, that it was very difficult to get him moved.

I think I have said enough to show that I had a good deal of miscellaneous work in this district. The regular work was also specially heavy, as may be shown by the fact that 9,117 cases were disposed of in the Criminal Courts alone in one year, more than double the number in Mymensingh, where the population was larger. Among so many the number of those that called for the personal supervision and interference of the Magistrate of the district was proportionately greater.

There was a lady too, resident at Alipore, who was

renowned for her devotion to animals. She considered them as equal or superior to human beings, and that they ought to be at least placed on a par with them. She and her husband were personal friends of mine, and I was often at their hospitable house. But she inundated me with letters about ill-used ponies, all of which I used to hand on to the Mohammedan Deputy Magistrate, who was in charge of the Alipore subdivision. He generally took a somewhat lenient view of these matters; and his sentences never gave Mrs. Truman satisfaction.

At length, one day, she instituted a prosecution of two boys whom she saw riding a pony with a very sore hoof. The Mohammedan Deputy let them off with a fine of 8 as. or 1*s.* The next Sunday I was lunching with Mrs. Truman, and she made some very bitter remarks about this, and asked me why I had not tried the case myself. I replied that I had no time for such matters. "Then what *do* you do?" she asked.

She could not conceive the possibility of my having anything more important to look after. "I shall tell the Lieutenant-Governor," she said. And so she did, for she informed me afterwards that she had, and said that he was very much shocked. But she admitted that he laughed, and I heard nothing more about it.

She worried the Chief Commissioner of the Calcutta Police in the same way; but he revenged himself on her. One day in Calcutta she observed a donkey with a broken leg in a ditch, and wrote to the Commissioner, asking him to have it killed in the most merciful manner possible. He however, sent it down in a cart to her house,—where there

was an enclosure for all kinds of refugee animals,—and requested the chief veterinary surgeon of Calcutta to go and attend to it.

This person entered into the joke, and going down in the evening when Mrs. Truman was out, very successfully amputated the broken leg, and left a message that he would come to see it at any time, night or day, if called upon. No joke for Colonel T., as his fees were 1 gold mohur = 32*s.* a visit. The donkey at first recovered, and when I next saw Mrs. Truman she told me the whole story, which of course I had heard before, and ended up piteously with, "But what am I to do with a donkey with three legs?" Some days afterwards I met Colonel T. and asked him how the donkey was. "It has pleased Providence to take it," he growled; "but I don't know that I am any better off, for now there has come a cow with its tail twisted off."

To all my ordinary work was now superadded the Census, which, after many threats, it was finally decided should now be taken the following cold season. In most countries where such operations have been performed, it is merely a question of preparing forms, leaving them at the various houses to be filled up, and then tabulating the results.

The number of people who can read and write in India is proportionately very small; *e.g.*, in a small area, comprising sixteen villages, 395 households, and 1,951 heads, in which I had an experimental educational census taken, only $4\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., or under 100 men, could read or write, and not one woman. This was thirty miles from Calcutta. In another census, comprising 34,818 heads, in a locality

about forty miles from Calcutta, only 3 per cent. could read and write; and out of 17,407 women, only six individuals possessed this knowledge, all of them Hindus.

As usual in Bengal, we Magistrates were expected to make bricks without straw; and the only extra establishment allowed me was two clerks for census correspondence.

My plan, which was approved by the Government, was as follows: a Bill was passed by the local Legislature, empowering us to call upon the Zemindars to furnish us with enumerators to be approved by us, and, when appointed, subject to certain penalties for neglect of the duties entrusted to them.

Every house in the district was, or ought to be, in the beat of some chowkeydar, or rural policeman. A register of these beats was kept at each police station in the jurisdiction of which it was situate. I first caused all these beats to be verified, and any omissions and errors rectified. I then issued orders to the police to call upon the Zemindars to appoint enumerators, one to each chowkeydar's beat, or, in case of a large and straggling beat, two or even more.

These enumerators were to come to the respective police stations concerned, and there undergo an examination in reading and writing; and when approved by the police officer in charge, their names would be sent to me for approval.

I made the police thoroughly understand, that if they did not take trouble about these things they would have a bad time of it, and that those who did it best would have the first chance of promotion.

In all the municipalities I made the Municipal Committees responsible for the enumeration. One great difficulty was the boating population. The southern and eastern portion of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs is a network of tidal streams; and the number of boats continually passing through these, to and from Eastern Bengal, is enormous. But they nearly all go by certain routes, where the channels are kept deep by dredging, and at the entrance to which tolls are taken. I made the toll takers 'enumerators," and arranged that the counting of the boating people should go on for seven days, and that to each boat counted a ticket should be given, as proof of the fact, the boatmen being ordered to show it in case of there being an attempt to count them a second time.

They were likely to adhere strictly to this, for they all had a dread of being counted twice over, as nothing we could do would completely disabuse the people of the idea that the census had some connection with a poll tax. I recollect a case of a man having four sons; and on the enumerator asking him how many males he had in his house, he said three only. But the enumerator, who had local knowledge, pointing out that he had four sons, he replied, "Surely you would not tax them all?"

Then again I had to consider the woodcutters in the Soonderbun forests, who would be absent from their homes, and where no enumerator would get at them. They were all residents in certain neighbourhoods; and I instructed the enumerators, when filling up the forms for their villages, to ascertain what males were absent for this purpose. The troops at Alipore, Dumdum, and Barrackpore, the

military cantonments, were to be counted by the military authorities.

I was allowed to choose my own day, or rather night, for the actual counting, and fixed on the full moon of January 1872, the 15th, the same date was selected for the neighbouring districts. A month before this date I had all the police officers in charge of stations simultaneously before me, and explained to them *en masse* the plan of operations, answering any questions they might wish to put, and settling all difficulties.

The printed forms to be filled up were supplied by Government, and were simple enough. The headings merely comprised the name of the village and the police station in the jurisdiction of which it was situate, the names of the males, with their castes and professions and their ages in decades, and the numbers of the females (as there was a great prejudice against mentioning their names) and the number of children attending school.

I now made over these forms to the respective police officers concerned, to be distributed to the enumerators, and sent them back to their duties, saying I should come round myself in a week's time to see what they had done.

This I did, in company with the District Superintendent of Police, who, I may here say, was the most hard-working and conscientious subordinate it was ever my lot to have under me. We journeyed many miles in boats in the south-eastern portion of the district, and many on wheels in the northern; and the way in which the police had carried out my orders was marvellously satisfactory.

In only one place, at Port Canning, did I find any

confusion in the appointment of the enumerators to their respective beats; and I promptly had the officer in charge removed, as an example to others. At Baraset I happened to be present when an enumerator was sent in by the Zemindar for approval by the police, the first appointed having fallen ill. I looked on at his examination without appearing to notice. It was not long, for he held the form, handed to him to read, topsy-turvy, and was at once dismissed with scorn by the examiner.

In some places it was, as may be supposed, very difficult to get men of sufficient literary acquirements; and the Zemindars had to employ their own land agents, or perhaps some of the younger members of their family, to do the counting. The enumerators were allowed to fill up their forms as long before the 15th of January as they chose; but they were bound to go round on the night of the 15th and test the correctness then and there of the entries so made. In the jungle tract of the Soonderbuns I allowed this to be done in daylight, as nightwork was very dangerous.

The village forms, when filled up, were made over to the village chowkeydars and taken by them to their respective police stations; those of the municipalities were similarly sent, and thus we had bundles of returns for each police area, subdivided into bundles for each village and town; and these were then forwarded from my office to the Registrar-General, to whom the counting of the whole of Bengal was entrusted.

The result was, I believe, a series of most unexpectedly accurate returns; and the cost to Government of the census

of the district was under £30, not a very extravagant sum for enumerating for the first time 1,952,898 people.

The census of the suburbs I entrusted to the Vice-chairman, instructing him in the general details, and requesting him to employ as many voluntary enumerators as possible. He rather distrusted these, and did not act fully up to the spirit of my orders; but, as it turned out, the voluntary enumerators did their work better than the paid; and had he employed more of them, he would have avoided expense and saved himself a great deal of trouble. But yet the census was accurately taken.

In Calcutta it was done by a contractor, and failed. Whole streets were found to have been omitted. This man had been anxious to be allowed to do the suburbs by contract also; but I unhesitatingly declined the proposition, and was very glad that I had done so.

It happened that on the night of the census our active Commissioner, Raj Kumar Ghose, was in such a profound sleep that he could not be awoke; and he therefore boldly asserted that the whole operation was a farce, as his house had not been visited at all. However we had the testimony of his own servants against this; but it serves to show what unfounded and reckless statements even the most educated natives are ready to make.

Before the final counting, the native press had numerous stories about gross extortion in the rural tracts by the police and the enumerators, and I had plenty of work in answering extracts in the *Weekly Sneak*. Some of these statements were put forward by European missionaries, who, as far as my experience goes, seem to me, as a rule,

to be most eager to make accusations against officials on the *ex parte* statements of any native, without sufficient inquiry.

The only case in which any grounds appeared for the charge, was one where two police constables had gone to a village and represented that they had come on the part of Government to count the people and collect a tax of one pice, something under a farthing, per head. There was proof that they had taken about 2 rs., or 4*s*. This was very annoying, as it was the thing of all others we were most anxious to avoid, viz., the appearance of any connection between the census and extra taxation. These men were convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. Their conviction was published everywhere; and with all possible inquiry I could not ascertain that any sort of extortion on this pretence had been committed anywhere else.

In February I received orders to accompany the Lieutenant-Governor on a tour through the Soonderbuns in his yacht. His official acrimony towards me had been considerably modified of late, though it had not entirely ceased; and when a chance of promotion had occurred he had given me the vacancy, showing that his bark, though very disagreeable, was worse than his bite.

I had been made a Joint Magistrate of the 1st grade, which gave me an income of 900 rs. monthly; and according to existing arrangements, I drew two-thirds of the difference between this and 1,500 rs., the pay of a Collector of the 2nd grade, viz., 400 rs., so that my salary was now 1,300rs = £130 a month, or £1,560 a year. My predecessor

in this post was a 1st grade Collector, and had been drawing £2,290. I have explained the reason of this difference in pay to men doing the same work, in the commencement of this chapter. But I had been only twelve years in the service, including my year of studentship in Calcutta and sixteen months furlough, so that I had not much cause of complaint.

Our first stopping-place in this trip was Port Canning, to which point the yacht had been sent on, and we went down by train. Our party consisted of the Lieutenant-Governor and his private secretary and aide-de-camp, the Commissioner of the Presidency Division, and another official, the agent of the East Indian Railway. This latter must have experienced some feelings of complacency at the contrast between this unfortunate line, now the property of the State, and his own prosperous undertaking.

At Port Canning itself there were no grounds for any feelings of satisfaction to us officials, except the reflection that we were not responsible for the reckless expenditure and miserable waste of which there were signs all round us.

Our quarters on the yacht (described in a previous chapter) were comfortable enough, though we all slept on the upper deck, except the Lieutenant-Governor himself, whose cabin was large and airy. It is necessary to anchor at night in these rivers; but the next morning early we passed the site selected for a fort, the subject of the litigation mentioned above—a mass of dense Soonderbun jungle and soft mud. The Lieutenant-General wished to land and survey the subject of his legal triumph,

but was dissuaded by our remonstrances. The appeal case was still pending.

So we steamed on all that day and the next, through endless mud and jungle, sometimes in broad rivers, sometimes in narrow water passages with only just room for the yacht to pass. Here and there we found the boats of wood-cutters moored, but no signs of habitation. Alligators we saw innumerable, and one or two deer, but no tigers, though they are very numerous here, and in my official reports were continual entries of some poor wood-cutter being carried off by them.

How these animals exist here is a mystery, for there is not a drop of fresh water, and the low-lying soil is nearly all covered with water at high tide. The voyage was somewhat monotonous; but I had brought plenty of official bundles with me, and had ample occupation. The number of alligators in these tracts, and even higher up the rivers affected by the tide, is incredible to those who have not seen them.

In my previous tour with the District Superintendent of Police in the more cultivated parts, I had observed them on every sand-bank, and nearly all the bathing-places were surrounded with bamboo palisades to protect bathers from their attacks. One day, as I was writing inside the boat, I heard an exclamation from Skipworth, who was looking through his telescope. I went out to ask what was the matter. He pointed to some men bathing at an angle of the river about 200 yards ahead, and urged the boatmen to get on as fast as possible.

"I was looking through the glass," he said, "without

any particular object, at those men. There was another a little apart from them, and I saw an alligator's head rise from the water, seize the man by the waist, give him a toss in the air so that his head fell into its mouth with his legs dangling out, and then disappear."

We came to the spot in a couple of minutes, attracting the attention of the bathers by shouting. When we reached them they had not even missed their comrade, and were horrified when we told them what had happened. They were bathing in an unprotected place with the usual recklessness of natives, and this poor wretch had fallen a victim as the result. We saw nothing more of the beast or his prey.

On the third day of our present tour we emerged from the jungles into the mouth of the Hoogly river, close to Saugor Island. Here heavy embankments have been raised and a great deal of land reclaimed from the jungle. We landed, and I found on inquiry that the census had been carefully taken.

One of the villagers gave us an account of the terrible cyclone of 1864, when the storm-wave coming up from the Bay of Bengal had swept completely over the island, and drowned or swept away every living thing in it. This man told us that he was carried over the channel through which we had just passed on to the mainland, and shared the luck of many others by being caught in the branches of trees, where they held on until the wave had passed. He said that cattle and tigers were swept in an indiscriminate mass together across the channel, and that the latter were powerless to do any harm. Many of the

former, especially buffaloes, were saved; he had recovered some of his own.

It was not possible to test the truth of his statements; but, if veracious, they were decidedly sensational. I believe, however, there was considerable foundation in fact for all he said. These storms are of incredible violence, the coast is low, and there is nothing to stop the in-rush of the sea. The storm-wave, attaining a height of some thirty feet, is a feature peculiar to them. Many a good ship has succumbed to them. The coast, too, is a mass of dangerous quicksand; and even if any of the wrecked crews reach the shore, escaping the dangers of the waves and the swarms of sharks in the waters, they have to encounter the tigers on land, and there is nothing to welcome them in the inhospitable jungle.

The Government has caused to be constructed three houses of refuge on this coast; they are merely wooden huts raised on piles, on three little sandy bluffs, and are entered by a wooden ladder leading up to a trap-door in the floor. It was my duty to inspect these once a year. They are filled with tinned provisions, candles, blankets, and articles of warm clothing, flannel, etc., very useful to any shipwrecked crew who could find them; but I could only ascertain one instance of their benefiting the class for whom they were intended. Everything had, of course, to be left unlocked; and they were generally plundered by the wood-cutters, who ventured down here during the north-east monsoon, when fine weather was a certainty.

The sand all round them was thick with tigers' foot-prints. On climbing up the ladder, and putting your

head through the trap-door, you found yourself face to face with innumerable large bandicoot rats, who ate the candles and gnawed the clothes. The tinned provisions were safe from them, for they could not use the knives provided to open them. The inspection was not an agreeable task at all.

Some three or four years before this, the steamer *Thunder* had been lost in a cyclone, and it was supposed that some remains of the ship or crew might be found on shore in this neighbourhood. A steam tug was sent down to make search for her; and a boat, manned by Lascars, was sent on shore. Two men had got out of the boat, and were hauling it up by the painter, when a tiger jumped out on one of them, and carried him into the jungle. The other leapt into the boat, and the crew rowed back to the steamer, which returned to Calcutta without any further search. A truly inhospitable coast, on which I had been in danger myself twelve years previously.

From Saugor we steamed a little way out to sea, the weather being perfectly calm, in order to meet the Governor-General's party, who had been down to the Andaman Islands. Our Lieutenant-Governor was to join him here, and go on to Madras with him, while we were to return up the Hooghly to Calcutta. His fleet consisted of a man-of-war and a steamer chartered from the British India Steam Navigation Company. We had not waited long before we saw the steamer making for us; but did not sight the man-of-war.

She stopped near us, and sent off a boat, which, on approaching, we saw contained two Members of Council

and two aides-de-camp, all of whom we knew well. We leaned over the side and offered hearty greetings, to which no response was made. This puzzled us; and we were still more surprised when we saw the Lieutenant-Governor, who had gone to the lower deck to meet them, get into their boat, and go over to their steamer, which at once proceeded in the direction of Calcutta.

However, the mystery was soon cleared up by the Private Secretary, who told us the sad news of Lord Mayo's assassination. By dint of hard steaming, and favourable tides, we reached Calcutta that evening and found every one in a state of the deepest concern. The story is too well known to dwell upon.

My further official connection with the matter was to see that the roads in my suburban jurisdiction were kept well watered for the mournful procession which accompanied the corpse to Government House. I also acted as a mounted marshal, with other officials, to keep the crowd in order. Our presence was really unnecessary. A more quiet assemblage I never saw; and one sole desire seemed to animate every one present, viz., to show respect for the memory of the dead. My chief trouble was my own horse, whom I found it somewhat difficult to keep quiet under such heavy firing, and in the excitement of the crowd. It was a long time before we reached Government House, where the bier was taken into the marble hall, and a short service read. The bereaved widow was present; her form quite concealed in black drapery, and motionless as a statue. The whole scene was as sadly impressive as anything could be, and not easy to be forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

INVALIDED HOME.—PENSION.—CONCLUSION.

AND now the hot weather came on again, and my work seemed to grow harder, and my official cares more numerous. The Lieutenant-Governor had become much less harsh; but was still snappish officially. I often used to sigh now for the ease, even accompanied by the dulness, of Mymensingh.

At length, one steamy evening in August, at the close of a long and harassing day's work, with unlimited untouched bundles before me, I felt an intolerable pain across my chest, which compelled me to leave anything further undone, and to get home as I best could. It was the last time I ever sat in office. The next morning the doctor pronounced rest and a return home imperative. Like so many other Anglo-Indians, I was put on board the next steamer, with all my comparatively youthful aspirations cut short, and life in great jeopardy.

An exceedingly kind, and even flattering, letter from the Lieutenant-Governor reached me just as I was starting. He was absent from head-quarters, on a tour in Assam. It was very welcome, though so late.

Rest in a temperate climate has kept me alive. For two

years, I drew half-pay, on medical certificate, viz., £780 a year; for a third year, subsistence allowance, viz., £350; and then, as my doctor peremptorily forbad my return to India, I was compelled to resign the Service. All these years were allowed to count as service in calculating the amount of pension to which I was entitled. This has been settled, under the present regulations, at £350 a year.

I have endeavoured to depict in the foregoing pages truly the life and work of a civilian in Lower Bengal, where the country is peaceably settled, and there is a total absence of military excitement. It is with bitter regret that I have had to relinquish this, which I consider to be the finest career in the world.

There are, of course, drawbacks. The climate is exhausting; and I should say that from the 1st of April to the 1st of November, there are very few Europeans in the plains of Bengal who can say that they feel really *well*, though they may be able to work hard, and play hard too in their evening leisure. Indeed, hard mental work turns the attention away from the cruel heat, and tends to keep the body of civilians more free from casualties than any other class of men in India.

There is also the enforced separation from children, more severely felt by those who marry young, and possibly from wife. The absence from relatives is an inseparable accident of sojourn in any foreign country.

On the other hand, a civilian jumps at once into independence. With a little prudence, his salary from the very first is enough to place him beyond sordid pecuniary cares, and he can devote himself to his duties, which, as I

hope I have shown, are full of interest, and unlimited in variety.

It is ennobling to a man's character to feel that (his maintenance provided for) he is working, not for himself, but for the good of large numbers subject to his administration. Notwithstanding red tape, the personal power of civilians for good or evil is very great indeed. I can honestly say that, with one or two exceptions, from the highest to the lowest, all the members of my Service whom I have known have felt this deeply, and acted accordingly.

Notwithstanding my own sad breakdown, and in spite of the general drawbacks above mentioned, I would say that any young man, not having very special interests in England, who obtains an appointment in the Indian Civil Service, is to be envied.

00086894

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018